

ドラゴン

~竜騎士への道~

2 わい
Wai



MFブックス

Dragoon

Arc 2

by Mishima Yomu & Wai

[Novel Updates](#)

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Illustrations



「……お前は、そんなに俺が憎いのか」

「え？」

ルーデルは剣の柄を握る。
女神と黒い霧の声が
聞こえるというのに、
自分は何もできない。
この分では、声も届かない。

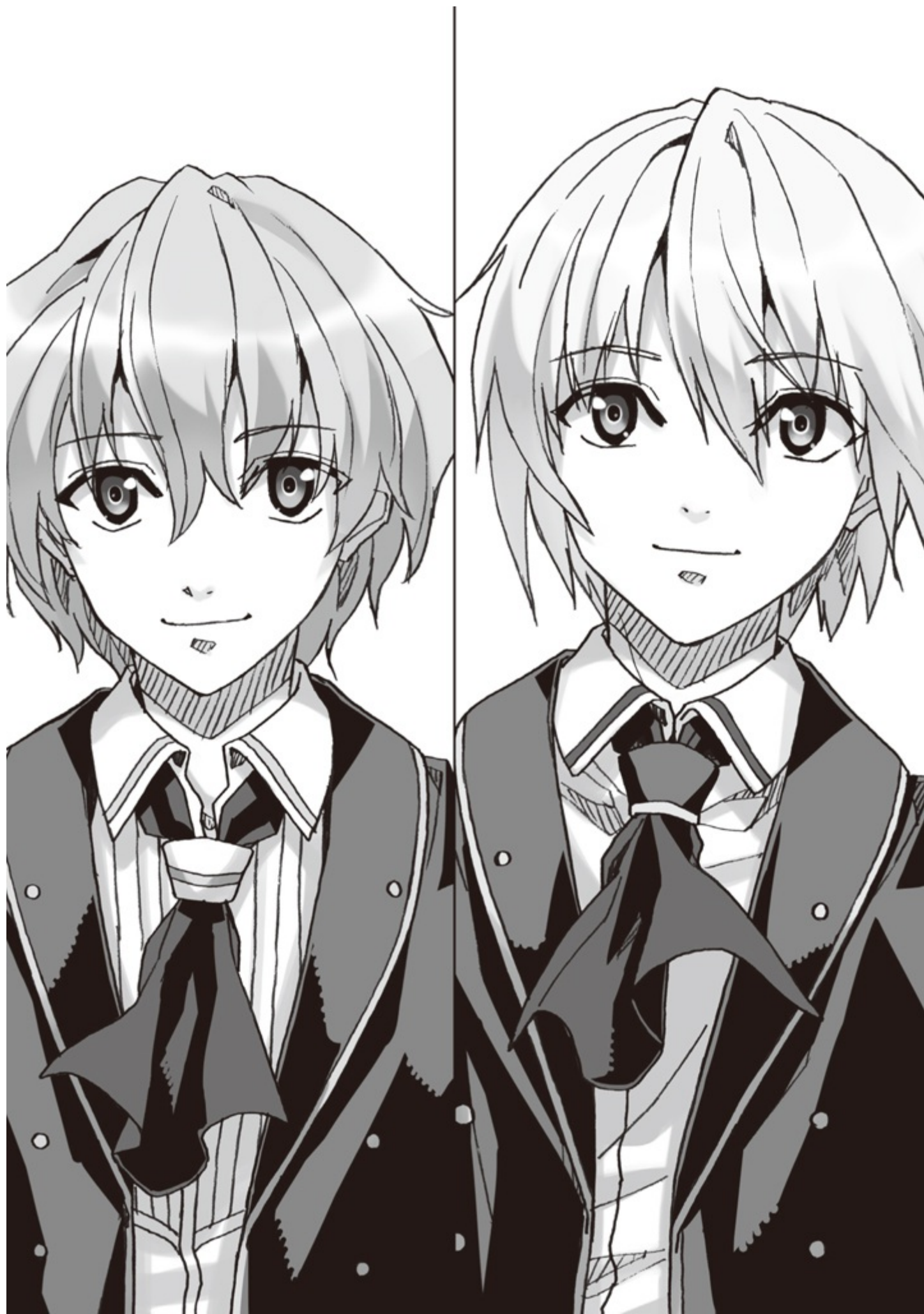












Chapter 37: The Young Man, the Blacksmith, and the Shadow

Arriving at a town near the border, Rudel's party met up with their client-a merchant. It was evening when they arrived, and as it would be dangerous at night, the subjugation was set for the following day. Vargas and Eunius sallied forth into the town of the night, partly to prepare for tomorrow, while Luecke spent his time with a book in the inn.

Basyle went out saying she had to look into some things... something was off about the requester, so it seems she went off to ask around town about the man.

And Rudel decided to look around the blacksmithy of that border town. Vargas already had his own equipment, and Eunius possessed his own specially-made claymore. Even Luecke's self-protection one-handed sword was a special order. But Rudel's sword was a cheap one.

Perhaps because he would only ever swing it around in training, the one he received at his manor was a hand-me-down from the soldiers. He had been using it fine, but lately, its quality was dropping, and it was starting to chip. He was carefully looking after it... but when it came to life or death, he did have his anxieties.

"Is the store still open... according to the innkeeper, it's supposed to be somewhere around here..."

Rudel walked alone through the unfamiliar town. Walking by the innkeeper's memo, and after a while, he caught sight of a number of weapon shops. Lined up in front of the stores were sturdy weapons and well-ornamented ones... a wide variety. After looking around the display weapons, he entered a shop to see their stock.

"This is best for kids."

"A rapier? I'd prefer something more durable..."

"How about it, noble boy!? Aren't all our store's weapons the coolest!?"

“Yeah, they do look cool (Those unnecessary ornaments look heavy).”

“If you buy two, I’ll throw in this knife as a bonus.”

“I don’t need two.”

A majority of the shops either treated him like a child or tried to push expensive goods onto him due to his noble status. While there were definitely a few nice pieces among them, as none of them suited Rudel himself, he decided to give up.

It was at that moment he spotted a tarp draped over the street, a single man sitting cross legged over it. Atop the tarp was a single katana. Rudel had learned about it from Izumi, so he stared at it as a rare find. He thought of it as an eastern saber, but according to Izumi it was used differently.

“How rare... but why is there only one?”

Standing before the man, Rudel looked down on the blade. Right, katanas rarely circulated through Courtois. Yet the man selling such a valuable item wore tattered clothing, his beard and hair a scraggly mess. He seemed to be in terrible shape.

“It’s the last piece I was able to make with my partner. At this point, I no longer have a smithy to make another...”

The man explained with uncomfortable words. While Rudel knew he wouldn’t use it, perhaps Izumi would be happy to receive it, so he pulled out the exact price of the tag.

The man looked at Rudel in surprise, posing a question as he took the money. By no means had he presented any lesser sum. He had grown intrigued by Rudel who could calmly hand it over.

“Do you intend to use this katana? As the seller, it may be odd for me to say, but if you don’t know how to use and look after it, it’s no more than a lump of iron.”

Taking the katana, Rudel carefully held it as he spoke.

“I have an acquaintance from the orient, this is a gift. It’s not like I’m the one using it so you don’t have to worry. Truth be told, I wanted a weapon for

myself, but I couldn't find anything."

The money Rudel put out had been from the rewards of the monster slaying he had been doing as of late. But in the academy, he had little opportunity to use it, so his funds would only build up. He had intended to use it to buy a new weapon for himself... but in the end, it became a present for Izumi.

"... I see, so you're acquainted with one of my countrymen."

As the man stared off in reminiscence, Rudel said his thanks and walked off. The man called out to Rudel's back.

"I'm Zouken. I live in this town with my comrades and family. Please send my fellow countryman my regards."

"I'll pass on the message."

And with one new encounter, Rudel's day came to an end.



Around when Rudel's day closed, two dragoons were spending their time in cells below the palace. The rampaging two had been prominent powers of the country, and the damage was great. For that sake, they were seized in due time, but instead of a reprimand, they got solitary confinement.

There were shackles around their wrists, and by their special make, those cuffs made it difficult to use magic. Proof that the guards were quite wary of them.

In just a few minutes, these two had destroyed the area. Cattleya and Lilim spent their time in separate solitary cells. As it was night, Cattleya was asleep. But Lilim...

"Why do they always come to hate me?"

'Because you're repulsive.'

"I wanted to get married you know. I loved him..."

'With eyes like those, you're one to talk. As if there's any man who could love you.'

"Everyone... goes away because of these eyes... if only these eyes didn't

exist!”

‘Are you really going to crush them? Are you fine with that? It isn’t your fault... the one at fault is...’

Finding Lilim’s monologue to be ominous, the guards didn’t want to draw close. They didn’t hear anything, they didn’t see anything. That Lilim was talking to the wall, and that the shadow projected on the wall... was Lilim’s conversation partner.

“The one at fault... right, it’s Rudel’s fault! That detestable one!”

‘That’s right, hate him! The Rudel you loath... the fiancé who betrayed you!’

Before her engagement to Rudel, Lilim had been betrothed to an elven man. But after seeing her black eyes, the man annulled the engagement. He was a kind man, and Lilim truly believed it would be alright if she revealed her secret. Yet she was betrayed.

That fiancé of the past, and Rudel, who even now was an engagement-candidate-for-argument’s-sake, their forms overlapped in Lilim’s head. The shadow that guided her, warped her to the conclusion resembled Cattleya in shape and voice. Once the shadow overlapped with Lilim’s, Lilim stood up and tore off her shackles.

“That’s right, I’ll kill him! I’ll kill the man who betrayed me!”

Lilim’s blond hair gradually changed to silver, her skin turning from white to black... and white insignias rose to the surface of her blackened skin. They were marks that greatly resembled the monsters that had attacked in the forest.

‘Hate him... Hate Rudel, kill him! There is no way he can be allowed to live! The purpose of my existence is to ‘return Rudel to his base’. And if that is impossible... then kill him!!!’

Born in Cattleya and matured within, ‘it’ declared if returning him to his original state proved impossible, it would erase the character Rudel from this work. To it, he was the first act of treason towards the world. On a situation where the surroundings accepted Rudel, it had a will to carry out its reason for existence to the end.

‘The will of the world is irrelevant... this is my will!’

Using Magic, Lilim escaped from the cell. That day... a single Dragoon fled the palace alongside her dragon.

Chapter 38: The Young Man and the Dark Elf(?)

“It’s over there... one of our merchants said he saw the ogre around that forest. I’d like you all to slay the ogre in this forest.”

Led by the imperial spy posing as a merchant, Rudel’s party proceeded towards the forest of the strengthened ogre. Having circled around beforehand, the imperial soldiers and Mies had come to observe the experiment. The strengthened ogre that would move just as ordered lay in wait for Rudel’s party... it’s power far surpassed a standard ogre, boasting speed and a high resistance to magic.

For such an experiment where victory was already assured, Mies could only reluctantly watch. It was an official mission from the empire so she was unable to be negligent.

But in the airspace above Mies and Rudel, a dragon and elf were taking a nose dive.



Rudel and co proceeded through the uneven ground of the forest, remaining wary of their surroundings. When an ogre-a beast said to boast a rough temperament-was supposed to be here, the forest was much too quiet. On top of that, they couldn’t help but feel something was strangely off. Basyle was the same. Through her info she had investigated the night before, she definitely did hear rumor of the ogre.

But even so, the merchant who put out the request was strange. While saying he was afraid, he was still taking an extended stay in the village, and she couldn’t feel any impatience from him. When it came to merchants, time was money, so when he should be at such a loss...

“Rudel-sama, stay on your toes. If worse comes to worst, please consider abandoning this request altogether.”

Keeping fleeing as an option wasn’t cowardly. But abandoning a request impacted one’s credibility. Even with that in mind, they had to consider running

away. It was a considerably shady request, it seems... that on his mind, Rudel climbed a sudden slope when something fell from above.

“What is it!?”

Eunius immediately reacted and took a stance with his sword, Vargas held up a large shield and stood in front of everyone. There, the ogre they were requested to take out was trampled under the foot of a dragon, and on its back was the figure of one in the garb of a knight.

The scene shocked all. No, only one was enthralled... it was Rudel.

“It’s a wind dragon! Lilim-sama too... and she’s all black!”

On the back of the Wind Dragon, Lilim was dark... she had become a dark elf, and had changed to an extent that no one would be able to recognize her had Rudel not pointed out. More than that, everyone gathered,

(How could you tell?)

The question came to mind.

The surprised party’s eyes drifted to the ogre the Wind Dragon had taken out in an instant. A dragoon had taken their mark. This wasn’t particularly strange. But Lilim was clearly acting peculiar.

“Phh fufufu! This vilest of fiends has been burnt to cinders in my flames of darkness!”

... The ogre there had been crushed to death by the dragon. There were definitely no flames involved, and even if it was supposed to be cinders, the body was clearly there. For some reason, Lilim was covering half her face and striking a cool pose.

“She didn’t even use any magic, right?”

Eunius looked at everyone to confirm, and everyone nodded. Rudel tried to stick up for her, but in this situation where she clearly didn’t use any magic, he reluctantly gave a nod.

“More than that, I can’t say for sure that’s Lilim the dragoon. If Rudel says it, then there’s no doubt about it, but I have heard before that dark elves are dangerous.”

Luecke said as he hardened his guard.

“I’ve never heard that Dragoon Lilim was a dark elf. So that in mind, would you care to answer...!?”

The moment Basyle tried to get this situation in order and called out to Lilim. Rudel suddenly cut at Basyle.

No, to be more precise, he cut at Lilim who suddenly approached. The knife in Lilim’s hand let off sparks against Rudel’s blade.

“Wha!? That’s way too fast!”

Vargas tried to deliver a late blow to Lilim with his shield but she dodged with ease. On her back, her blackened wings of elven magic beat furiously... it’s a bit disgusting, Basyle thought as she broke into a cold sweat.

She was surprised Lilim was able to close the gap in an instant, but she praised Rudel for reacting in time. And Rudel had concluded Lilim had seriously tried to cut Basyle down.

“What are you trying to do, Lilim-sama? That one was a serious blow, right?”

“Serious? Fu... if I was serious, then everyone here would be dead already!”

As Lilim set her body into a pose, Luecke fired magic. Eunius cut in right after Luecke’s attack, but Lilim casually avoided both. The five of them were being played by a single dragoon.

Rudel didn’t know Lilim’s fighting style. Rather, the styles of individual dragoons were treated as highly classified information. They weren’t incompetent enough to give away their weak points. But as dragoon was a popular occupation, if they fought somewhere, then parts of their fighting style would naturally spread.

Even so, Lilim’s fighting style remained a mystery. She had either taken out her foes too fast, or just as she had tried with Basyle, perhaps she was specialized in assassination... Rudel thought as he exchanged blows with Lilim, when the unmoving wind dragon suddenly struck up a conversation.

‘Child of man from some time ago. I want you to save my contractor... do you think you could kill her?’

A voice that almost seemed to flow directly to his head, alongside his admiration, Rudel felt an intense confusion.



Watching the intense clash of Rudel's party and the dragoon from afar, Mies' had long since crossed from panic into fear. To the soldiers of the empire, dragoons were their angels of death. The presence of just a single dragoon would bring outrageous casualty to the battlefield.

The soldiers who had been leading Rudel along had all used the confusion created by Lilim to run and meet up with Mies.

"What's with this... why have the dragoons come out so soon!? This isn't an experiment anymore..."

Not knowing what to do, Mies' squad had made another large mistake. They had been unable to notice a single dragoon's approach.

"What experiment? You'll tell me all about it, won't you?"

Mies turned around only to find no one. Turning to look up, she found a single red-haired knight on her red dragon had managed to make her way directly above them. Mies' company resolved themselves for death.

That dragoon was Cattleya. On Lilim's escape, a shortage of hands had caused even the troublemaker Cattleya to be used. The decision handed down by the dragoon captain was to apprehend Lilim before anyone saw her, and to eliminate her if she caused a problem before she was found.

"W-what could you be talking about? An experiment, oh... right! We were conducting experiments on the monsters in the forest."

As Mies tried spouting a lie, Cattleya sword grazed her face. The sword that stuck into the ground took on quite an ominous form. That demonic sword was one of the reasons Cattleya was called a genius. Even though Mies' grazed face had been cut a bit, it wasn't bleeding.

Cattleya jumped down from her red dragon to where her sword stood, and once she had retrieved it, Mies' men had finally regained their composure as they readied their own weapons

“I’m in a hurry, so let’s get this over with quickly... I’ll have this demon sword suck some blood to prepare for my fight with senpai.”

As the surrounding imperial soldiers cut at Cattleya, Mies felt the sensation of power draining from her body from that slight graze, experiencing the dread of that sword. And no matter how many times Cattleya cut up her men, no blood would flow... to be more precise, their blood was being sucked away, but Mies watched over an exceedingly ominous bloodless massacre.

And it was to be... the every time the sword sucked blood, its power increased. Once her final subordinate was cut down, Cattleya approached Mies.

“Now let’s hear your story. What is an imperial soldier doing in a place like this!?”

From Mies’ subordinates’ way of fighting, Cattleya had determined them to be soldiers of the empire.

Pressing her demon sword to Mies’ throat, Cattleya... had already called her comrades, so she was sure it would be fine even if Lilim tried to flee. It seemed she was in battle with someone, but she had yet to confirm who. No, she was sure they were already dead but was shirking off on confirming that.

The one she fought was Rudel’s party, and she had yet to notice they were still in combat... until an intense explosion sound rang out from the battlefield...

Chapter 39: The Upperclassman and the Older Woman

‘Child of man from some time ago. I want you to save my contractor... do you think you could kill her?’

Rudel heard the wind dragon’s voice right in his heart. At first he was dumbfounded, but his situation wouldn’t permit that. Lilim was fighting with the advantage against five foes, forcing Rudel’s party into a defensive battle.

(You’ll tell me to kill her... I’m...)

Rudel’s troubled movements were a danger on the battlefield. And Lilim wouldn’t let them go unchecked.

“Got you!!!”

A mid-range attack she took distance to make, she hammered in a consecutive stream of intermediate magic. Alongside Lilim’s call, multiple bursts of wind, ice and fire assailed Rudel. And the ones who leapt out in front were Vargas and Basyle.

“What are you doing, Rudel!?”

As he said that, Vargas used the shield he held in both hands to take the magic, while Basyle shot magic of her own to negate it. But after the detonation of that magic stream... Lilim’s magic had an overwhelmingly higher output, Vargas’ shield was destroyed as he was blasted back, and while not to the same extent, Basyle was sent flying by the impact as well.

“Vargas! Basyle!”

“Two out for the count!! A troublesome woman’s gone, and I reign supreme!!!”

Regripping his sword, Rudel rushed at Lilim. She parried his blade with her knife. When Rudel had put much more power into it, reality had his force redirected by the dagger she held in one hand.

“Why are you doing this!?”

Even now, Rudel was lost. He didn't know whether he was capable of killing her... but as he mulled over whether he should or not, Rudel's attacks became distracted.

"Why? ... Because you went and abandoned me, dammit!!! What's more, leading a woman around, showing her off... I'll kill... I'll kill you!!!"

Rudel felt her black eyes were growing even darker. As he evaded a swipe from her knife, he noticed the unnatural white markings over her. That white insignia he had seen twice so far carried no good memories for him.

"That mark... Why do you have that mark, Lilim-sama!?"

"Stand back, Rudel!"

As Rudel cried out, it came Luecke's turn to shout. Rudel reacted to his voice and instantly leapt back. And the advanced magic Luecke unleashed on Lilim... the torrent of flames hit her head on, but

"Ha HAHAHA!!! Such firepower, before my jet-black flames, it falls short of a gentle simmer! But I've already grown weary, so I'll get serious... come to me, my wicked dragon."

'...'

Saying some incomprehensible things, Lilim called for her own wind dragon. The dragon abided and approached her. It was by no means a wicked dragon.

"I'll kill them all! Erase all I... all I hate from existence!!!"

Straddling the dragon, Lilim soared into the sky. Rudel could see her black eyes flow tears as she continued to laugh. Eunius understood there was nothing he could do against a dragon flying through the sky as he clicked his tongue.

"Tsk! At this rate, we're really screwed."

As if to answer Eunius' weak-willed statement, two volunteered themselves as decoys.

"P-please run away, Rudel-sama. we'll somehow keep her back here, so the Three Lords should..."

Covered in wounds, Basyle and Vargas lend each other a shoulder as Basyle

offered the proposal. Turning back, Rudel seriously looked over them.

“Hah, hah, it ain’t a bad idea to save a junior. And more than anything, I decided to become a cool brother for the little ones... go, Rudel.”

As he gave a pained laugh, Vargas’ arms were covered in blood, and his left arm was definitely broken. But looking down over the two who stood, Lilim,

“So you’re still alive, woman! This time, my wicked dragon’s flames shall smite you down!”

‘Child of man...make your choice. My contractor, or those close to you... if you wish to save all, you can only kill my contractor. And right now, she has been taken over. It’s painful to watch her... kill her, please.’

“Why aren’t you attacking!? Hurry and kill that housewrecker!”

Lilim ordered the dragon. From how Basyle was the first one she targeted, it seems Lilim didn’t take kindly to any women around Rudel. Likely from the fact that other women were around the man she was supposed to be engaged to.

‘Do not ponder, child of man! I’m approaching my limit to how far I can oppose my contractor’s words.’

“... You’re right, I don’t need to ponder. Thank the heavens there was no need for me to worry to begin with.”

Rudel muttered as he looked at the dragon in the sky.

It was at that moment. Cattleya’s red dragon rammed straight into Lilim and her wind dragon.

“I don’t really get it, but let’s use this chance to run, Rudel!”

Eunius put a hand on his shoulder and called out. Luecke lent a shoulder to the injured Basyle and Vargas, and was in the process of retreating.

“Go ahead of me... I found something I have to do.”

“What are you talking about!? You plan to leap into that fight of monsters!?”

At the end of Eunius’ stretched finger, the wind dragon pressed down by the red dragon, and the two dragoons who had leapt off their backs. An intense battle of mid-range magics and close quarter combat was unfolding between

them. As Lilim leapt about, firing magic bolts all around, Cattleya drew power from her magic sword, cutting them all down as she closed the distance to get Lilim into a close-range match.

That's all that was going on, but it was clearly above the level of students. Each individual movement was carried out with unbelievable speed and precision, the magic output and sword swipes on another level... their momentum was one that made one wonder whether the surrounding forest would be blown away. No, it really was being leveled. There were already trees tumbling down as the surrounding terrain swiftly changed.

"... They're both my fiancées. This is my problem too."

"Idiot! That's irrelevant now... while they may be betrothed to you, those two are already done for. Cattleya raised a problem, and with today's events, then in the worst case, Lilim will get death! The engagement's annulment is only a matter of time."

A dragoon who launched an attack on the eldest sons of the three lords. That alone was a problem, but if the world were to know she used a dragon to carry out a personal grudge, the universal prestige of dragoons would fall. As this was a problem related to the country's dignity, she wouldn't be able to avoid severe punishment.

"Fiancee or former fiancée, it doesn't matter. I decided to save them!"

Rudel seriously looked at Eunius. And Eunius lost out to his will. Leaving Luecke to treat the injured, he decided to help support Rudel.

"Got it. But what are we going to do? I can't think we'll be able to stop a fight between those two."

At the ends of their sights, they could see the two dragoons exchanging insults as they fought. Consecutive bursts of magic, a tempest of swipes from a magic sword, a battle of monstrous proportions unraveling between them.

"... If we can get it down to just me and Lilim, I'll be able to do something."

"I don't know what you're planning, but that makes Cattleya the problem. I'll do something about her, so you definitely have to save Lilim. By the way, how do you intend to do it?"

“I haven’t the slightest idea, but... that’s not a problem!”

Giving an answer brimming with confidence, Rudel headed off towards where Lilim and Cattleya were fighting. After giving a sigh, Eunius followed along.

“Will you really be alright!?”

Hearing Eunius’ cry from behind, Rudel thought over what he had decided in his heart.

(I’ll definitely save her!)



Two headed back off to battle. Meanwhile, seeing Rudel and Eunius off, Luecke began treating Vargas and Basyle. He could only take emergency measures, and after he had completed them, he was thinking of leaving this forest at once. Luecke did worry for his friends’ safety, but he was just as worried about the whereabouts of the merchant who led them there.

As he thought over the merchant Basyle heavily suspected, he could only anticipate the worst and take the appropriate action. To save the beaten two as fast as possible, he prioritized returning to town.

As he thought over such things, Vargas suddenly burst into tears.

“Are you in pain?”

While Luecke mulled over whether to use his scarce remaining mana on Vargas’ treatment, Vargas shook his head.

“No, I was just ashamed... I said something cool to Rudel, but in the end, running away is all I’m capable of. I can’t stand it. I wanted to become a man who could save someone...”

To Vargas’ words, Luecke didn’t know what to say. But Basyle embraced him.

“You were cool. It’s because you decided to be a decoy that I was able to muster my courage... thank you.”

“Basyle...”

Left on the sidelines, Luecke was even more oblivious on what to say as he scratched his face and averted his eyes. He prayed for Rudel’s safety.

Chapter 40: Fiance vs. Fiance

The clock turns back and restarts as Cattleya thrusts her demon sword towards Mies' throat.

"Now I'll have you talk."

"Gn..."

In contrast to Cattleya's level-headed conduct, even if you called her military personnel, Mies was raised as a high-society lady whose fighting prowess fell short of the standard soldier. Her shaking body was only able to stare back at Cattleya.

But at that moment, from where Lilim fought came an explosive sound alongside an earthen tremor. As the red dragon looked in that direction, it reported whatever it saw to Cattleya. The individual it reported on was the problem. Cattleya didn't hesitate to send her dragon a complaint.

"Why are the Three Lord brats in a place like this!?"

From Mies' point of view, Cattleya who suddenly started talking was exceedingly scary. But at the same time, she felt Cattleya's attention veer astray. Mies... if she had to name a specialty, it would be her ability to escape from desperate situations. A character who originally appeared in the game, all of Mies' parameters were low, but she possessed a characteristic skill.

"Now!!!"

Mies used an apparatus she carried on her person. A 'smoke screen'. A cylindrical something rolled across the ground, and from it, smoke rushed out with good momentum to steal Cattleya and the red dragon's sight. But that alone wouldn't be a problem. For a dragon and dragoon, something of this level wasn't enough to get away... if it were only smoke, that is.

"Wha!? Wait, it stinks!? What's with this smoke!!!?"

Cattleya held her mantle against her nose and mouth. Because of the smell, her dragon was unable to give chase to Mies, their foe. Within all of that, Mies splendidly managed to make her way through the putrid smoke to freedom.

Her special ability... 'Successful Flight' was an ability to flee from any situation with a high probability.

The situation was on her side. Because there was no way Mies could take precedence over Lilim in this circumstance. Now that she knew Lilim's opponents were the eldest sons of the three lords, Cattleya had no choice but to prioritize them. As her original plan was to apprehend or murder Lilim, she couldn't let herself get stuck up over Mies forever.

"You've forced me to use my trumpcard... when this smell is a nightmare to wash off! This is why I hate Courtois! Stupid lizard knight!!!"

Mies complained as she ran. And Cattleya headed straight for where Lilim was.

"Seriously, what's this smell!? Even so... time after time after time, why does that guy have to cause so many problems!?"

She was also complaining as she rode her red dragon to rescue Rudel's party.



Arriving at the battlesight, Cattleya and her dragon went right into their attack. From what she could see from the sky, Rudel had a party of five, and two had already dropped out. If she wasted any more time, someone would end up dead.

"I'll have you calm down, senpai!"

The two colliding dragons struggled as they fell to the ground. The two dragoons that leapt from their backs landed, took up stances with their weapons of choice and immediately went into battle.

"Cattleya!!! What business does a bullshitting bitch have with me!!?"

Confirming Cattleya, Lilim violently nailed in her emotions. From Cattleya, who knew the usual Lilim, this was a shocker, but Cattleya had constructed the cause.

"It's an order. Please come in quietly..."

Cattleya's demon sword rung against Lilim's knife. As their blades locked and their faces drew close, Lilim spit on Cattleya's face.

“Acting all polite at this point!? I know all about your personality! What business does the woman who’ll open her legs to any and everyone have with me!!? Laying your hands on my... my fiancé, you trying to brag!!?”

Lilim didn’t know what she was saying at this point. Within her chaotic head, Cattleya was a housewrecker trying to steal her fiancé Rudel away. To Lilim, the current Rudel had overlapped with her past Fiance, making him a target of affection. Rudel who pledged his future to her betrayed at the sight of her black eyes and was playing around with another woman.

That was how Lilim recognized it. But Cattleya...

“What are you talking about!? When you’re usually acting so unconcerned... and I’m a vir___!!!”

“Bullshit! Always flirting around with all the male knights... putting on a show!”

Both sides took distance, this time making for a battle of magic. While Lilim fired an endless stream Cattleya channeled magic into her sword, sending shockwaves to contend in a mid-range exchange.

“I’m just being courteous! I have no interest in the men who approach me after just looking at my face and body!”

“Still bragging!? Just like that, you act ‘courteous’ with all the popular men, that’s why the other female knights hate you! Haven’t you noticed how they avoid you in training?”

“... Don’t screw with me! The other women all hate you for putting on airs! When you’ve left the break room, it becomes the world smack-talk competition, I tell you.”

The dragoons spewed abuse as they fought. The high level of their battle only made the contents of their conversation seem exceedingly wasted.

“I-in the first place, what do you even like about that brat...”

“Like you... like you could understand my feelings! Unlike you, I couldn’t care less about pedigree or money! I just... want to get married!!!”

On Lilim’s scream from the heart, how is that any better? The question

crossed Cattleya's mind.

"I just wanted a happy household... and because of these eyes, it would never come to me. As if you could ever understand how I feel!!!"

"I don't understand, and I don't even want to! Marrying someone you don't even like..."

As Cattleya mumbled out the last words, Lilim,

"What are you dreaming about? Think there's some prince on a white horse out there for you... pff."

At Cattleya's surprisingly innocent side, Lilim burst into laughter. Lilim's laugh that said more than any words could brought Cattleya to her limit.

"You're... you're dead meat!!!"

"I've been trying to kill you for a while now, dumbass!!!"



"... Hey, Rudel. I don't think I want to jump into that fray anymore..."

Approaching the two in battle, Rudel and Eunius' feet suddenly stopped as the conversation entered their ears. Rudel had stopped to judge his timing, but Eunius was clearly drawing back from those two.

"Is there a problem, Eunius?"

"I mean dude, you want to save *that* woman?"

As Eunius pointed at the two, he looked into Rudel's face with a serious expression. At the end of Eunius' finger, the intense cursing exchange of the dragoons contained some indecent phrases men would hesitate to say.

"Of course! I'll definitely save her."

"Hah... fine, got it. I said I'd help out... I'll resolve myself. Hah..."

Eunius redid his grip on his claymore as eh began running off in Cattleya's direction. Rudel regripped his sword as he headed for Lilim, but... he did feel a little anxious.

(Please hold out just a little more.)

His own sword had fundamentally reached its limit in its exchange with Lilim. From the feel of it in his hand, the slight difference from usual was one he could only tell after using it for so long. But even so, Rudel knew. This sword was at its limit...



The moment Lilim and Cattleya's war of abuse was to enter close range once more. On Cattleya's side Eunius, and on Lilim's Rudel. They jumped in between them to bring a stop to their battle.

"...! What do you think you're doing!?"

Cattleya cried out as soon as she saw them, while Eunius gave a bitter smile and explained. As he had heard that previous conversation, Eunius' face was needlessly stiff.

"Well just hold on a bit, Mrs. Dragoon. My pal said he was going off to save his fiancée, and he wouldn't listen to what anyone would have to say... so could you give him a moment? If you say no, then I'll have to keep you company a while."

Eunius pleaded in a tone as if he was hitting on her. But from Cattleya's point of view, the people she saved were getting in her way. It wasn't something to rejoice over.

"Are you sane? Even if you're the eldest son of a Three Lord house, there are things you can and can't do."

And you're one to talk? Eunius thought as he put power in his sword to indicate his will not to let her go any further.

Cattleya took a leap back from him to make some distance.

"Even if you manage to save her... senpai, no, that dragoon will be..."

She was certainly in for some serious punishment. So Cattleya wanted to say before closing her eyes once and taking another look at Eunius and Lilim, conversing with Rudel behind him. Unlike before, Cattleya couldn't feel any hatred welling up towards him. She undid her stance to watch over the two of them.

Chapter 41: The Young Man and the Black Shadow

In the act of jumping in-between the intense fight of two dragoons, Rudel and Eunius had achieved splendid success. They had succeeded, but therein lay the problem. The difference between an active dragoon and Rudel-who while strong, was still a student-remained too great. Lilim made sport of him with her dagger, at times pressing him back with magic attacks.

“The real deal really is different!”

In contrast to Rudel’s slight delight, Lilim was seriousness itself. Within Lilim, a dark and squirming emotion welled and spoke to her.

‘Kill him! The fiancée who betrayed you... kill Rudel!!!’

“I’ll kill you! I’ll definitely kill you!”

Thinking of their difference in physique, Rudel’s larger male build held the advantage. But from body motions to experience, Rudel was lacking in too many fields. There was no excess in Lilim’s movements, and her magic activation and accuracy had been polished to the limit.

A difference in experience irrelevant to power tormented Rudel. But even so, Rudel fought on to save Lilim. He was to save someone much stronger than him. Yet Rudel had the resolve to go through the pain to fulfill it.

In Rudel’s heart, he heard the voice of Lilim’s dragon.

‘Child of man, what is your intent? Could it be you actually intend to save my contractor? I appreciate the thought, but if you seriously care for her, then slay her! If she lives on, all that remains is suffering.’

To that dragonic voice resounding through his heart, Rudel remained facing Lilim, the dragon to his back as he called out.

“Taken over and tormented so... convinced that no one will ever recognize her! That’s not how it should end!”

As Rudel smashed his sword into Lilim, the blade was parried by her knife. With flowing movements, she skillfully redirected the force.

“So you’re even trying to take my dragon this time... just like that, everyone always leaves. It’s always like that, because I’m repulsive! If you hate my eyes, just say it! I’ll gouge them out at once and become the sort of me you like! So... so please don’t abandon me!!!”

Lilim’s black eyes shed tears, and Rudel looked at her in sorrow. Right, Lilim’s form resembled the original Rudel who never dreamed of dragons. A certain something he sensed made for another reason he couldn’t abandon Lilim.

The original Rudel was a side character made to be hated, only to die a wretched death at the onset of the story’s endgame. Unrecognized by all, everyone would leave him. Deserted by his fiancée Cattleya, he incurred casualties to the country as he fled and pleaded with the empire to let him defect.

As a result, an imperial general cut him down like trash, and he became the laughingstock of the imperial soldiers. To the very end, a wretched small-fry side character. But even Rudel had an important role to play. The event of him being cut down by the enemy general was the event that signaled the start of the final chapter.

Rudel’s death commenced the story’s finale. That was already set in stone, the will of the world.

While Rudel didn’t know anything about that, something in his heart pulled at him. Perhaps that was precisely why he was so desperate to save Lilim.

“It’s the end! I’ll kill you and die myself!”

As Lilim rushed in with knife and magic, Rudel pulled off his pant’s belt and held it in his left hand. Rudel’s sword was approaching its limit; he had a bad feeling about it. He wouldn’t be able to fight for much longer. He wouldn’t be able to put up a fight empty handed... As Rudel thought that, he also took action to bring it to an end.



From a little ways away, Cattleya and Eunius watched over the two. But Eunius took just a little distance from Cattleya. Cattleya was sure he was still wary of her. But the man in question,

(Why does this woman smell so bad?)

He was unable to stand the smell of Mies' smokescreen.

"... It's going to end soon. I'd appreciate you didn't stop me this time. Otherwise, Rudel-sama will die..."

"Ah? That guy ain't dying. Up until he becomes a dragoon, that guy's got no intent to die."

As Eunius answered full of confidence, 'what sort of basis is that!' Cattleya's eyes seemed to say. To Cattleya, Dragoons were just another division of the country's knights. While their characteristics stood out, she was well aware the country only saw them as a convenient knight force at their disposal.

Ideals ran contrary to reality... rather than the dragoon the people yearned for, the high knight that protected the important personnel of the country was more blessed in his work. Away from the front lines, if you could gain the trust of royalty as a guard, then promotion wasn't a dream.

In contrast, the dragoons' workplace was much too dangerous. And even if you earn the crown's trust, that trust would only have you plunged into even more dangerous work.

"What's there to yearn for? What's there to dream? When you don't know a thing."

Hearing Cattleya's murmur, Eunius breathed a sigh as he watched over Rudel's fight.

"... Values vary from person to person. Rudel knows of the dragoons' duty, and he understands how they're used. And he still doesn't give up... that's why I'm able to root for him."

After a look at Eunius' profile, Cattleya returned her eyes to the battle.

"I'm jealous... maybe that's why I hated him so much."

Rudel who could continue pursuing his dreams. Cattleya felt herself envious of that part of him. Her dream had been to become a girly princess. But reality had her born to a mid-ranking noble, the talent she showed from a young age making a knight of her.

Those talents that were enough to make everyone around envious of her were ones she never wanted to begin with. If she was able to discard them, she would have done so at a moment's notice. Yet swords took over her gardens, and sturdy steel covered her dress... to Cattleya who was raised in such a way, Rudel was too bright.

She who lived just as she was told, and Rudel who pressed on towards his own dream. Cattleya's eyes watched the two of them square off.



The belt in Rudel's left hand wrapped around Lilim's right arm to seal it. With that, both sides could only use one arm, and forcefully brought into close combat, Lilim changed her knife to her left hand to cut at Rudel. Rudel caught the blow with his sword, but

"Aha! Doesn't look like you can use that sword any longer."

Just as Lilim said, a crack spread across sword Rudel had used to learn every trick in the book. Rudel could see it as well. Lilim didn't let that moment's distraction go to waste. This time, she pushed him down and started shaking the magic wings on her back. As she did, the vibrations and a detestable sound assailed Rudel.

"Kuh."

Rudel tried to escape from that position. But to make matters worse, even her knife began to vibrate.

"It's a technique I rarely get to use in battle, but... how about that? I can cut through iron like butter. I'm going to slowly slice through your sword and into your heart."

As Lilim said, her vibrating knife was slowly eating its way into Rudel's sword. And the moment just before the blade would've been completely cut through, unable to stand the oscillations any further, the sword let off a shrill sound as it snapped. Letting off sparks against the knife, it violently broke.

But at the end of the end, as if to protect its master Rudel, the point of the blade flew towards Lilim's eyes. What's more, at point blank range. It was something she wouldn't be able to move, and Lilim was forced to move from

the spot. In that gap, Rudel recovered his stance and pinned her to the ground.

The force of being pushed down caused the knife to part from her hand, and thinking she would be killed by Rudel mounting her, she quietly closed her eyes.

(That's enough. At this point, dying here would be...)

"Open your eyes! You're there, aren't you?"

At Rudel's words, Lilim opened her eyes. As she did, she found Rudel staring deep onto her black eyeballs. And she let words flow from her mouth.

Irrelevant to her own will...

'How far will you do hinder me? If only you kept quiet... if you did, the story should have gone on without a hitch! And this time the world will protect you? Going as far as to push me aside, the world will choose you!?'

Within Lilim's confusion, Rudel went on with labored breath.

"I don't know who you are, and I don't know your goal. But you see... if you're going to cause any more trouble around me, then I can't just stay silent!"

"Ha HAHAHA!!! You make me laugh. To think you'd care about your surroundings. But just remember this. The world may have recognized you, but that is only to guide you to your end. No matter how far you go, you shall never find reward. Just like me, you'll be abandoned by the world."

Rudel faced the culprit borrowing Lilim's mouth through her eyes.

"And what of it?"

'... What?'

"Who cares if some world abandons me! Even so, I'm not alone. It's always been like that... someone's always been by my side. There are people who support someone as selfish as me. Who'll recognize me! So I'll recognize Lilim and I'll recognize 'you'. I'll say you can exist, you can be here. Now what?"

Saying that, Rudel gently kissed Lilim's forehead. Perhaps it was the sort a parent gave a child. But to Lilim who wanted to be recognized by others, it was more than enough to calm her heart.

"Thank you... Rudel."

‘Even so, for me, recognizing you is...’

Two voices escaped Lilim’s lips before she fell unconscious. As she drifted off, a black mist exuded from her body. Once the fog cleared, her blackened skin and silver hair returned to white and blond.

And lifting her up in his arms, Rudel started carrying her. That form was the very essence of a pretty woman in the princess’ cradle of a young knight. Seeing that scene, Cattleya felt just a little envious of Lilim.

The wind dragon freed from the red dragon’s grasp approached him. The ground shook under the stride of its large build.

‘Child of man... you did not honor your promise to me.’

“I’ll save her. I’ll give a report on this incident as well, and I’ll make an earnest plea to my house to borrow their power. So could you give me just a bit of time?”

Rudel still wouldn’t give up, and as he had even saved its contractor, the wind dragon couldn’t say anything. It looked up at the sky.

‘Looks like my comrades are close...’



From Cattleya’s report and the investigations of his subordinates he’d brought along, the dragoon vice-captain thought he had to give up on Lilim. In the few hours since he landed... his first impression that this was the worst still remained largely the same.

Intended harm against the three eldest sons of the Three Lord houses, and with various other charges, heads would surely fly. Physically. Yet to the vice-captain who thought that, Rudel reported with sparkling eyes.

As Rudel reported nothing but the truth, he didn’t even try to advocate for Lilim in regards to what she had done. But he lowered his head to the vice-captain as he spoke.

“Can’t you do something to save her!? She’s my fiancée.”

As Rudel lowered his head, the vice-captain was troubled to no ends. He also wanted to save Lilim, who still had a future ahead of her, but that didn’t change

the fact she caused a problem. And it wasn't just Rudel. Even if Rudel's house tolerated her, he couldn't think the other high nobles would stay silent.

"I appreciate the sentiment, but... when the scale's grown so large..."

As the vice-captain struggled for words, Eunius who'd watched over him and Luecke called over.

"I don't mind at all. If I told my old man I got to fight a dragoon, he'd just boast about it."

"I don't care either. I'll write an appropriate letter to my house."

On the words from the two, Rudel's eyes sparkled. But those three weren't the only injured. Basyle and Vargas were hurt as well. Sensing Rudel's feeling, Vargas who borrowed Basyle's shoulder nodded.

"I'm fine, let's just say I hurt myself fighting an ogre."

"Vargas, are you sure?"

"This is just a favor, Rudel. You're going to return it someday."

As the vice-captain looked around, the five of them lowered their heads.

"I can't promise anything, but I'll do all I can to obtain clemency for her. We'll transport you to the town so... hey, Cattleya, you get over here too! ... No, nevermind."

Cattleya awkwardly approached the vice-captain. She also intended to take these five to the nearby town, but... the smell she gave off stopped all in their tracks. Heartlessly, even her dragon took some distance from her.

"This isn't my fault I tell you! That woman, damn you, imperial scum!!!"

Chapter 42: The Young Man and Marriage Annulment

The death match with Lilim over, Rudel's party was delivered to the nearest town on the vice-captain's dragon. While six people on a single dragon's back did feel narrow, Rudel was in high spirits all the way. The vice-captain of the knight brigade he so looked up to was going out of his way to transport them, so there was no helping his delight.

"Sit still, Rudel. From here on's the hard part. With me and Eunius, if we send a letter home, they'll move to some extent. But when it comes to your house..."

In regards to Luecke's strained and muddled last words, Rudel answered with a bitter smile. Luecke and Eunius knew of Rudel's household environment. When he was supposed to be the next head of the house, they were unnecessarily... no, abnormally harsh on him. That harshness wasn't something carried out with his future in mind. It was something there simply to give him a hard time.

It was unthinkable Rudel's house would move from a single letter. On the contrary, it wouldn't be strange if they moved in complete opposition to Rudel's will. That's what Luecke thought.

"It'll be alright. Father and mother, they're good at hushing up these sorts of things... they aren't too concerned about me, so perhaps it's best I don't send a letter. I've been writing to them ever since I got to the academy, but I only get form letter-like ones back."

Eunius prodded his elbow into Luecke for turning the conversation towards something dark. And up to the town, they spent their time in a bit of an awkward air.



In a town near the border, Mies wrapped herself in a tattered rag as she walked down the main road. The rag itself smelled terrible, but Mies also reeked of the smell of the smokescreen she used to escape.

“Goddammit... I managed to retrieve the confidentials from the inn, but isn’t telling me to get out a bit too rude? And all the shops are way too cold to me! I can’t even do a bit of shopping... this is why I hate the kingdom!!!”

The scented smokescreen had helped her escape from the dragon. But Mies knew they would use that very stench to track her down. She stuck out like a sore thumb. She stank!

“I’m hungry... I want to eat a sizzling steak... ow!”

As she walked with her eyes to the ground, Mies collided with the person walking in front of her. ‘Twas Rudel who had returned to the town. Vargas and Basyle had made for the hospital, while Rudel was on his way back to the inn with Luecke and Eunius, a bunch of freshly grilled meat skewers bought from a nearby stall in hand.

Her eyes locking on, Mies’ stomach let out a grand rumble, and Rudel smiled as he took one skewer out and presented it to her. To Mies, Rudel looked simply radiant to her. But,

“One skewer is five ces.”

“You’re charging me!?”

Mies cried out. Reluctantly producing money from her wallet, she exchanged it with Rudel for some precious food provisions. Luecke and Eunius looked at her from a bit of a distance... due to the smell.

“You wanted to buy them but they wouldn’t let you, right? Your monologue was so loud I could hear everything. Or could it be you wanted me to treat you?”

“Eh!? F-from what point did you hear?”

“From when you said you were kicked out of the inn, I think. Well, I don’t think there’s any helping it with that smell, but... I recommend that you stop shouting out your hatred for the kingdom. The knights are real tense right now, so they’ll drag you off in no time.”

Mies hurriedly thought over a way to get out of town. But her stomach was still empty, and crossing the border in her current state was bad. Wanting some

more provisions, Mies drooled as she looked at the many skewers in Rudel's arm.

Seeing that, Rudel tried handing over the entire bag of skewers to her.

"Fifty five ces for the lot."

"...! G-got it! I'll buy them all! I'll let you sell them to me!"

Not knowing if she was embarrassed or happy, Mies handed the money to Rudel, and just as she was about to take the bag, she looked at Rudel's face. Becoming even more ashamed, Mies looked away... but that was her mistake.

Mies' hand slipped, what's more, in her hurried motions from her embarrassment, what Mies' hand grabbed... was Rudel's pants. To make matters worse, Rudel's belt had broken in his fight with Lilim. As Mies pulled with good momentum, Rudel was caught off guard. And as a result...

"W-what are you doing!?"

"Eh? ... Gyaaaaaah!!!! Dragooooon!!!!"

Mies ended up pulling Rudel's pants down in their entirety. With his lower half fully exposed, Rudel could only panic. What's more, on top of Mies having taken a long, hard look at him, the girl herself had taken flight with the bag of skewers... Luecke and Eunius were distanced, leaving a pantsless Rudel behind.

As an even greater turn of ill fate, it was Cattleya's turn to enter the stage.

"So this is where you were. The vice-captain told me to transport you to the acade... wait! What do you think you're doing!?"

"N-no! My pants were just pulled down a moment ago."

Saying that, Rudel pulled his pants back up. Cattleya sighed, but she had also taken a calculated glance at Rudel's lower half. Losing interest in a fully clothed Rudel, she looked around only to find some document-like forms scattered around. Concluding they were surely Rudel's, she started gathering them up as she complained. But then she noticed.

"Good grief... I'm not sure what happened, but please do treat documents more carefully. Once you become a knight, you'll be forced to write up so many you'll hate the sight of... what are these?"

Taking a slight glance at their contents, Cattleya held her suspicions. They detailed something of an observational diary, but the way they were written and the lettering intrigued her a bit. After reading on, she found her explanation for the movements of the imperial soldiers in this incident.

“That’s not mine. Those papers were dropped by a girl. Hah, I’ll have to deliver them to her.”

“We’re giving chase. What are her characteristics!?”

“Eh? ... She smelled terrible, I guess?”

Hearing those words, a smile leaked across Cattleya’s lips. It was by no means a gentle smile... dark, a ferocious smile as if she had encountered a fearsome foe. Seeing that smile, while she smells, I guess Cattleya is a beauty as well, or so Rudel thought an irrelevant thought.

(That imperial woman who put me through such shame... I’ll definitely find her and put her on the rack!)

“I’m going to chase after that woman, so you three return to the inn.”

Saying that, Cattleya ran from the spot. And finally, Rudel was left alone.

“... I guess I’ll go back to the inn. More importantly, Luecke, Eunius! Quit laughing and help me out.”

Pushing their way through the onlookers who had gathered before he knew it, Luecke stifling his laughter and Eunius laughing grandly made their appearance.

“N-no, my bad. It was just so sudden I was late to react.”

“Going half-naked on the main road... as expected of Rudel. I’ve got to tell Izumi about this sometime.”

“W-wait! Why are you bringing Izumi up?”

The three laughed as they returned to the inn. By the documents Mies dropped, Lilim’s crime had become lighter, but they would only learn that after they returned to the academy.

The empire had been conducting battle tests on their weapon known as a

strengthened ogre. And while it may have been a coincidence, she had saved Rudel's party that had become the test subjects. With that fact in place, Lilim got off with a severe demotion and house arrest. Rudel himself forgave her murderous exchange after the ogre was slain, and as they were in a betrothed relationship, it was eventually overlooked.

But with this incident and their actions up to now, Cattleya and Lilim's engagements to Rudel were both officially annulled.

Chapter 43: The Young Man, the Little Brother, and the Fight

It happened a little while after Rudel returned to the academy from the town on the border. Vargas was hospitalized in the infirmary. His arm's injury was terrible and he required treatment even after he got back.

And once they returned, the eldest sons of the Three Lords were all called out by the academy's headmaster. About the dragoon Lilim's breakout, and the empire's experimental ogre.

"You've brought some troublesome things back with you. In the years since I first came to this academy... no, since this academy's founding, rarely have we come across students who've caused so much trouble."

Before the slightly worn-out headmaster, Rudel felt apologetic. After receiving a hush and various information manipulating orders, the headmaster and the teachers were breaking their bones on the punishment of these three.

Surprisingly, the houses besides the Arses House didn't have anything particular to say in regards to the matter, so that made matters somewhat easier... As expected, the Arses House alone said to punish Rudel abnormally for it. The evasive exchanges continuing on, the headmaster put to work by the palace had his share of trouble.

"Hah, even if you were just dragged into the mess, just look at what's happened. The three of you will be receiving a week of house arrest each. Because the official statement is that you were rescued from your dangerous plight by Lilim and Cattleya, the two dragoons... well, just use it to rest your bodies."

To the headmaster who was sighing often, Rudel posed a question.

"What about those two's punishment?"

"As it's become that they saved you, the problems they've caused up to now were written off. It's spread around quite quickly... while the Diade and Halbades House have given tacit content, this matter is something of an open

secret among the nobles and royalty. With the empire's experiment, it doesn't look like they can make these matters public. From what I've heard, it's because the Arses House alone issued a protest that the two of them have received minor disciplinary action."

"It's a good thing it's only minor, right Rudel?"

At the headmaster's answer, Eunius closed one eye and smiled at Rudel. Luecke let out an enervated sigh as he looked at him.

"We're also being subjected to that minor disciplinary action though."

In contrast to the two, Rudel felt mildly depressed learning that his plea letter to his house had been of no use at all. When he said he would save her, what really helped her out was the approval of Luecke and Eunius' houses, alongside the fact the empire was conducting experiments. Rudel hadn't done a thing.

"... Well, you students don't have to worry about it. For now, that is."

Leaving the headmaster's room, the three of them headed for the disciplinary room of the boys' dorm.



Rumors of Rudel had spread through the academy. Of all things rumors that he had taken on a subjugation request at the border, failed, and had to be rescued by dragoons. As such rumors spread, the academy's reactions were largely divided in two. The first, did Rudel do something again? Something like that, and if they had to say, then they thought of it no more as another page being added to Rudel's heroic epic (lol).

But the second sort was a problem. It was a reaction largely from the new students who didn't know much about Rudel... some easygoing nobles tried to earn some pocket money and ended up in disaster. Is how they saw it.

To the commoners and demi-humans who were oppressed on a daily basis, life—or-death jobs were what allowed them to live on. They couldn't stand a student taking them on half for fun. And a central figure to the new students called Fritz was another large factor.

Some such students holding their dissatisfactions gathered in the cafeteria for

lunch. Fritz included, around six students ran their mouths loud enough for the nobles eating separately to hear. This was only permitted because starting with Rudel, Luecke and Eunius suppressed the young nobles trying to crush Fritz.

When Fritz talked smack of Rudel for the world to see, of course, the other noble students were irritated. When Rudel heard of it from his former classmates, he cautioned them not to raise a hand. For Luecke and Eunius, it was Rudel's problems, so they gave similar orders to their own followers.

The fruit of their efforts tied into the events of the cafeteria.

"Nobles sure have it nice. If they're ever in trouble, the dragoons swoop in to save the day."

"When it comes to Rudel, isn't he the worst problem child since this academy's founding? Even that guy can have a stable future, so you really are a winner if you're born to a noble."

"Doesn't Rudel have a little brother? That guy's brother is apparently a piece of trash who abandoned the princess in the school outing."

Unluckily, class scheduling prevented any student outside the fundamental curriculum from being present in that cafeteria, and without any existences to contain them, those final words became the trigger. As a second year of the fundamental curriculum, Chlust naturally heard it all.

"... I dare you to say that again, pauper."

Standing from his seat, Chlust ignored his followers' calls for him to stop as he glared at Fritz. Receiving his gaze, Fritz stood as well. To Fritz, the Arses house was the most unforgivable of houses. He himself hailed from Arses territory, and tormented by heavy taxation, he had gone through considerable troubles to earn the money required to attend the academy people usually entered at fifteen two years late.

"I'll say it as many times as I must. The Arses House is a pile of trash... I'm saying you and Rudel are trash."

Fritz also stood and returned the glare. A number of fellow commoner students stood as well, enveloping the cafeteria in a peculiar air.



In the boys' dorm disciplinary rooms, Luecke was reading an after meal book, while Eunius was endeavoring through muscle training. This was no longer anything you could call discipline, and to add to that Rudel was training his spiritual concentration. Closing his eyes, he controlled the flow of mana through his body.

... The first time the supervising student saw, there was surprise to be found. In the first room, a man taking on a fearsome training regiment. In the second, a man silently reading through mountains of books filled with difficult contents. And the last room was filled with mana just by its resident sitting in its midst.

When it came to Rudel, he was sitting in a cross-legged meditation position Izumi had taught him. Perhaps because of that, the supervising student was sure he had been influenced by a popular book of eastern mumbo jumbo he had read a while back and added it onto his training.

"Erk... someone swap with me! The next time I come around, I'm sure I'm going to see something even scarier, Rudel looks like he's going to start floating just sitting there, but... h-he's not floating, is he? But it's Rudel we're talking about here..."

To the student who periodically made rounds to check on them, the scene was only abnormal. After a while passed and the supervisor went away, Eunius called out to the two of them.

"Hey, move a bit, why don't you!? Just because you're in this room, if you quit moving, you're going to ruin yourselves."

"Don't group me with you. It goes without saying that the proper quantity of exercise and food is more appropriate! Eating loads from dawn 'til dusk and doing nothing but muscle training... how about you study for a second?"

Luecke returned some cynicism. He turned to Rudel and called over.

"More importantly, what are you doing, Rudel? I've been feeling mana seeping through the walls for a while now."

"... Unity of soul and body."

"What's that? Will doing that make you stronger?"

This time Eunius jumped in. At first, it was a serious conversation, but things gradually seemed to stray, until eventually...

“I really think it comes down to the breasts, but what’s your take on the matter? You won’t say you like them small, right? I’ll correct such heresy!”

“Are you an idiot... it all comes down to balance. It goes without saying the overall balance is important!”

“Ah, Izumi’s coming.”

“Eh?”

“What?”

As they carried on a trifling conversation, Rudel sensed Izumi approaching the disciplinary rooms. It was abnormal for Rudel to sense her before she had entered. And as Izumi wasn’t showing up, they were just about to conclude Rudel had lied, when...

“There’s trouble, Rudel! Your little brother Chlust and Fritz are...!”

“... She really came.”

“You sure you two aren’t connected or something?”

Luecke and Eunius confirmed Izumi slam open the door with intense momentum. They felt impressed that Rudel had sensed her approach. But Izumi’s air was considerably strange. She was in a flurry, and as she had run her way here, was it something important? They thought.

“Did something happen?”

Rudel calmly asked.

“Chlust and Fritz are fighting in the school cafeteria! It gradually grew worse and... it’s become a feud between the commoner students and the nobles, a majority of the upperclassmen are away today on extracurriculars, and there are too few teachers around to contain it.”

It really was bad luck. That day was one where the periodic mandatory events was to be held, and a majority of the upperclassmen were attending it. There were more students than the average attending, so the teachers had to match that and dispatch a large portion of their numbers. Izumi had remained in the

academy because Rudel was unable to intend through his house arrest, but...

Everything was starting to motion much too conveniently.

Chapter 44: Brothers and the Boy

The school cafeteria had been destroyed by the students of the fundamental curriculum. In the kitchen, the staff members late to run cowered as they made their way to the deepest parts, while the teachers who entered from the cafeteria's main entrance had gotten into controlling the situation. But the commoner and nobles students had already reached the limits of their patience.

"I told you not to raise a hand!"

"So you'll save the noble! Teachers are enemies after all!"

"As if I could let the matter end with me belittled by a common imbecile! Shut up and watch!"

The first and second years of the fundamental curriculum had divided up between commoner and noble, using the cafeteria tables and chairs in their intense battles, and it had grown beyond what the teachers could handle. With their lack of numbers and the combat-oriented teachers off with the upperclassmen, the remaining teachers were classroom centered.

In such a classroom, the ones who constituted the center of this quarrel were Chlust of the Arses House and a commoner boy called Fritz. At first, both sides had started the fight with their fists, but once it looked like Chlust was going to lose, he took out the knife he carried on hand. From there, Fritz went into the magic he had only just learned, and accepted a wooden sword his friend had brought over to fight Chlust.

"You indigent excrement! Don't think you can live on, mocking nobles all the way...your family and all the people around you shall be killed"

"Just because you can't win, you lay hands on the people around me... you nobles really are the lowest of trash. Up until I came to this academy, I worked as an adventurer. I know just how dirty you folk are, and I know what I have to do!"

Knocking Chlust's knife aside, Fritz put a kick into his stomach and slammed him against the cafeteria wall. As some students raised a cheer at that sight, the

noble students were pissed.

With the case of Chlust abandoning the princess the year before, he had lost the trust surrounding him. But there were a number of young nobles who abandoned her, and as they were rarely criticized for it on the surface, his followers still stuck with him. Even so, this situation worsened the attitudes towards Chlust even further.

‘A noble disgrace who can’t even beat a commoner.’

The nobles fighting around looked on Chlust with cold eyes.

(Why... why are you looking at me with those eyes!? Why was so wrong? Why am I losing to the likes of this commoner...)

Unable to get his thoughts in order, Chlust tried to get back on his feet, when Fritz started knocking him about more than necessary. Fritz had chosen the path of beating him so badly he wouldn’t even think to get back at him. All around the demi-human students usually looked down upon hit the nobles around and blew them away with magic.

It was true madness. At the entrance of the cafeteria where such hysteria spread, the teachers and a portion of students lost their minds as the remaining upperclassmen who caught wind of the ruckus began to gather. Rather than the textbook teachers, hope was gathering on those upperclassmen.

And of course, Rudel was included among them.



Hearing the situation from Izumi and released from the disciplinary room, Rudel’s party of three made their way to the dining hall. At the entrance, they could hear the voices of teachers and the rampaging students within. Perhaps from their heightened tensions, even the teachers cowered at the jeers tossed around.

Seeing that circumstance, the one to take the vanguard was Eunius. While he was usually classified as a sociable noble, once he was angered, his tempered large build and fearsome face struck fear into the hearts of all. The other upperclassmen opened a path for him and followed behind.

“Move.”

Receiving Eunius' glare, the underclassmen went through a moment's surprise, but even if they were dealing with an upperclassman, they thought they had the numerical advantage, and didn't even try to step down. The students who fell unconscious a moment later... were blown away by his fists.

The students sent flying around the entrance caused eyes to gather on the upperclassmen making their way into the cafeteria, and the hall was enveloped in silence for a moment. Eunius at the lead, then Rudel and finally Luecke, seeing upperclassmen step in one after the next, the students of the fundamental curriculum were gradually gaining an understanding that they had done something terrible.

On the entrance of the Three Lords' eldest sons, the nobles stopped their squabbles. But that's not how it went for the commoners. The students who just enrolled that year were especially lacking in knowledge when it came to Rudel and the others. Those underclassmen could only work under the foolish preconceived notion that these were the idiotic nobles that had to be saved by the dragoons.

“So even the upperclassmen are joining in? Then so be it... I'll be able to take Rudel down before my third year. For you who can only hold his head high in these academy walls, I'll teach you that thing called reality.”

Fritz turned his wooden sword towards Rudel. The subjugation jobs he had carried out to that day let him hold confidence in himself. Unlike the academy's students who only learned theory, Fritz truly was strong. To Fritz who thought to become a knight once he left, his life here was no more than a game.

The fact the princess attended was another reason Fritz commuted to the academy. He had come to attempt to change the country called Courtois from the inside. Forging relations with those who would become the next generation, he held an ideal of making a country of his ideals. But no matter how you looked at it, his methodology was terrible.

Fritz had done jobs all over to learn of the world, but he only held common sense of a narrow scale. Crying out that nobles were evil, his thoughts from the standpoint of an adventurer that would earn money as long as they had

strength tied in with his actions in this incident.

His ideals were splendid, but his methods were bungled. That was the boy called Fritz. A child with nothing but strength had lined up pretty words and pushed them through with brute force.

Not knowing any of that, To Rudel, Fritz was the sort of existence he should be protecting from his standing as a noble. He didn't particularly think anything of the boy's belittling comments. He was actually more irritated at Chlust for laying a hand on Fritz. But even Rudel had to revise his thoughts after looking around.

In the kitchen, the aunties who would often throw in a bonus slice for him were shaking in fear, and even the teachers had been injured. The dining hall everyone used was in disorder, and it wouldn't be usable for a while to come. Here and now, were Fritz' actions any different from those of a bandit? Rudel was rapidly losing his interest in Fritz.

"... I've no interest in you."

Saying that, Rudel passed by Fritz' side and headed for Chlust.

"What are you doing, Chlust? And you call yourself a noble aiming to be a knight?"

"... Don't mock me! Trash like you has no right to look down on me! This is all your fault. If only you weren't there, I'd never find myself here, and I'd never lose to the likes of him!"

Chlust wept as he screamed out in vexation. His eyes were fearful as he looked at Fritz who tormented him. As Rudel had heard the gist of things before he came to the cafeteria, he turned back to Fritz and cut into conversation.

"I'll apologize for the trouble my brother has caused you... but you've gone too far."

"...! Like you're one to talk. How about you say that to the people suffering under Arses rule."

Fritz returned words of cynicism. Just like that, he lowered his wooden sword towards Rudel... Rudel didn't even try to dodge or block. Fritz hammered in a

few more blows, but Rudel didn't even flinch. The wood sword was the first to break.

“W-why...”

Fritz was surprised at the lack of effect of his own attacks, but without paying a hint of mind to that, Rudel declared for all to hear.

“Bring a stop to this idiotic ruckus. If you wish to continue, I'll take you on seriously next time.”

A fearsomeness different from Eunius' had put a stop to the students' quarrels.

Chapter 45: Sisters and Brothers

Once the fundamental curriculum uprising died down, Rudel and the others were released from the disciplinary room. The reason was simple, the disciplinary room was now at full capacity, and the teachers called this a special measure instituted for stopping the riot. While Eunius rejoiced, he was the only one who had remedial lessons waiting around the corner, while Rudel and Luecke went to pay Vargas a visit.

Izumi accompanied them, and as the three of them headed for the infirmary, they were greeted by the delightful form of Vargas being fed fruit by Basyle.

“He sure has it easy at a time like this.”

Luecke peered in from the entrance. Izumi watched and wondered if that was how people saw her and Rudel... she warmly watched over them. But Rudel boldly entered that dimension of happiness.

“Are you okay, Vargas? So the two of you got along that well... anyways, there was something I wanted to consult with you on.”

“... Rudel, you’re amazing.”

“Yeah, it’s Rudel after all.”

Luecke and Izumi awkwardly entered behind him. Vargas panicked with a reddened face, but Basyle just grinned.

“T-this is, umm... right, well, that’s how it is.”

While Vargas tried to give an excuse, Rudel cut right into his main point.

“The truth is, what I wanted to talk about... I’m troubled because I don’t know how I’m supposed to treat my brother. Can you tell me what I’m supposed to do? I heard you had lots of siblings, so I thought it might serve as reference.”

Alongside the cafeteria incident, Rudel explained how his little brother Chlust seemed terribly afraid. In fear of the first year Fritz, he had holed himself up in his room. Once he had explained that much, Vargas was surprised such an amazing instant had happened while he was hospitalized, but was even more

shocked to find Rudel ignoring all that, instead coming to consult on his brother.

“You don’t get along with your siblings, right? So I don’t think there’s much meaning in comparing my family to your relationship with Chlust, but... more importantly, what are you going to do about that first year Fritz?”

Vargas seemed mindful of Fritz and the first years who caused an incident of this level. They had gone too far, but even if they had gotten high on their horses, they were fellow commoner students. Surely he was curious about the punishment in store for them.

“I’m not really interested so I’ll leave it to the headmaster. And it’s not something I can decide. So how should I interact with Chlust?”

After thinking a bit, Vargas couldn’t reach an answer so he started talking about himself.

“Hah, this’ll just be about me. I’ve looked after my siblings, and I’m close to both my little brothers and sisters so I doubt it will serve as good reference, but... if they did something bad I would scold them, and if they came home after losing a fight, I’d teach them how to fight.”

“You didn’t lend them a hand?”

“No, wouldn’t it be strange if I came out into a fight between little ones? And kids are fighting all the time, you know. So if when my little brother was irritated he lost, taught him how to fight and don’t lose next time! I cheered him on.”

Hearing that, Rudel thought up something. Basyle tried asking in wonder.

“Chlust-sama is going to graduate this year, right? What reason do you have to care about him? I don’t think it’s revenge, but...”

Rudel and Chlust’s relations were terribly twisted. Warped enough it wouldn’t be strange to see them as noble siblings fighting over the position of future archduke. Basyle couldn’t understand why Rudel would care about such a person. Izumi was also curious.

“I think you should stop getting involved with him, Rudel. You’ve both got some things to think about, and while I don’t think you’ll raise a hand against

your little brother after he was scared so... what are you trying to do?"

"Yeah, I was thinking to help him back on his feet before graduation. The way things are going, he won't be of any use after he's sent to the borders, and in the worst case, it could lead to his death. Chlust is loved by my parents... I don't want my family to be saddened."

On those words, Luecke felt a slight sense of unease.

"But didn't you say your parents hate you? Do you really have to care about those sorts of parents? My parents were strict, but that was to make me first-rate. I don't get the feeling yours are like that."

While four pairs of eyes gathered on him, Rudel thought just a bit before answering.

"I'm thankful to the parents who brought me into this world, and on top of raising me, they're even letting me go to this academy. It's just as Fritz said, I really am blessed. It's definitely painful to be hated... but hating Chlust for it seems wrong."

Having heard out Rudel's feelings, while they couldn't quite grasp it, they didn't oppose it either. Vargas posed a question as a representative.

"So what are you going to do with Chlust? This is incomparable to just teaching him how to fight."

It was a question tinged with jest, but Rudel was serious.

"No problem. I'll teach him how to fight one on one, and the opponent is also decided. In order to overcome fear, rather than defeating the foe who instilled it, it is more important to win against yourself, or so I read in a book... after the fundamental curriculum's interclass tournament, I'll have him fight Fritz."

Izumi was opposed. Saving Chlust was nice and all, but she didn't see any good coming out of dragging Fritz in.

"W-wait Rudel! Fritz is no good. I'm sure he'll receive a harsh punishment for this incident, and his abilities are too far above Chlust's."

Luecke supported her.

"I'm also opposed. That guy made light of us a few times too many. Enough

for even Eunius to get pissed... if Fritz' punishment is too light, the other nobles aren't going to accept it."

Rudel listened in and thought.

"So facing Fritz is impossible... no helping it. I'll give up on Fritz and just train him up, I guess. No, perhaps I can pit him against Eunius?"

"Chlust is going to die..."

Vargas breathed a sigh as he put in a retort.



Perhaps Rudel's thoughts had got across, or Fritz was simply lucky. Through a certain individual's infiltration of the academy, Rudel's wish was to be granted. That individual was the first princess Aileen, and the main heroine of the story. Her interest in her little sister Fina and the academy were the cause.

As Fina had cried out in the previous year's tournament, she wanted to see with her own eyes what sort of life she was living in the academy. From there, she altered her plans, and on that very day when the riot was raised, she was in Fina's room surrounded by high knights, enjoying a cup of tea with her sister.

"You look well, Fina. I wasn't able to say it last time, but it looks like your life in the academy has become a good opportunity for you."

To her big sister's warm smile, Fina answered her true feelings. The elder sister Aileen had some hopes for all sorts of expressions to spread across her expressionless little sister's face.

"Yes, sister... this academy is the best place ever."

(Nothing but fluff and happiness! I really wanted to flirt and fluff up Mii today, while I consulted on how I'm supposed to capture master, but... it's because you snuck in that I never got to!)

"I heard you had someone you liked... father said it was that Rudel boy, but is that true? That has to be a joke, right?"

"... No, it is true. He has given me the cold shoulder but even now I am trying to earn his favor."

(Because of that black hair, my path to fluffadise is... I'll definitely lift that

petting ban and make master my own! Even so, good job father! With this, I can begin bridging the gap between us.)

But Aileen's expression suddenly changed.

"Fina, I cannot permit you to love a man like that. Barbaric and selfish... I heard he even went against father. I'm against it! While father and mother don't seem to mind it, we're dealing with one of the Three Lords, so even marriage is possible."

"I'm aware."

(That's what I'm aiming for. This isn't love or anything like that... this is fate! There's no doubt the heavens are telling me to set course for a fluffadise of my own! If it's for my dreams, I'll sell my soul to the almighty fluff!)

As they carried on such a conversation, the high knights suddenly started a ruckus. Wondering what was going on, the two inquired to the situation, and

"It seems there's been a riot in the school cafeteria. A commoner boy and the second son of the Arses Houses got into a feud... it seems Rudel-dono has contained the riot, but the academy has requested we keep on our toes."

"Oh my!"

"... Is that so?"

(The hell are you doing, Chlust? Bringing trouble to master's hands... more importantly, the commoner boy is probably Fritz, master's enemy, right? That guy doesn't do things halfheartedly.)

"I cannot forgive two brothers ganging up to bully a poor commoner! I shall talk with him directly. Gather those involved at once!"

"Eh!?"

(What's she on about? Even if they were feuding, no one said anything about bullying, right? Just because you hate him, you're having your image of him take priority? What's more, the one who quelled things was master. As I thought, master really is unlucky.)

After that, she wouldn't hear Fina's explanation that this was a misunderstanding, and Aileen went off to meet Fritz. It was a fateful meeting. And this meeting would come back to torment Rudel in the future...

Chapter 46: The Protagonist and a Friend

The day after the riot in the cafeteria... Chlust was shaking in his room at the dorm. Since that day, everyone would look down him. The nobles would call him a disgrace, while the commoners called him an enemy, their eyes full of scorn. Chlust didn't go to class, trembling had become the most he could do.

"Each and every one of them just doing whatever they want!"

Wrapping his blanket over himself, Chlust called out. At that moment, the locked door was forcefully kicked in. There, Chlust's big brother Rudel stood with the dorm's supervisor. Chlust had lost the key to his room once before, so he was using the supervisor's copy.

Rudel had tried to enter the room, but that reason prevented it from opening, causing him to take some rather forceful measures. The supervisor put in a word or two. After Rudel said he'd foot the repair fee, the supervisor nodded and left.

"... Chlust, get out here."

"W-what do you think you're doing? Out there? Don't just enter my room. You get out!"

In his confusion, Chlust ended up crying out loudly. Hearing that, Rudel... forcefully lifted Chlust up and dragged him out of the room. Going out into the boys' dorm yard, he tossed Chlust aside. He had prepared two wooden swords, and he tossed one of them towards him.

"Pick it up Chlust."

"So you too... you hate me so much? Each and every one of you comes to bully me..."

As he mumbled some complaints, Chlust didn't even try to look at Rudel. More than that, he was lightly shaking. Forcing Chlust to his feet, Rudel grabbed him by the lapels.

"From today forth, I'll be training you. I've already gotten permission from the academy and the house, so your resistance is futile... prepare yourself, Chlust!"

What a fearful Chlust saw was Rudel's serious face. His fear telling him he couldn't go up against that seriousness, something of a will formed to make him reluctantly take a stance with the wooden sword.

That day onwards, Chlust's days of harsh training began.



A few weeks later, in the renewed academy cafeteria, Eunius and his tagalongs appeared at the table Luecke and his followers ate. As Eunius boldly sat in front of Luecke, Luecke's followers tried to complain but stopped. His face was serious, and his atmosphere was clad in a spot of rage.

"There are a few things I need to ask. It seems this and that happened in my remedials..."

Cutting off Eunius's words, Luecke started into conversation.

"About Fritz? He punched Aleist's friend who was hitting on girls or something and Aleist beat him up so he's been hospitalized. At first, he just stepped in to mediate, but once he learned his friend carried no fault, he got serious... he's quite the immature one."

"Wrong! Not that... wait, Aleist punched Fritz!?"

Eunius bit onto the story with Aleist. It wasn't what he originally wanted to know, but he had some interest so he asked Luecke.

"It's famous, you know? He had intended just to tease. I'll repent, but I won't regret, is what that Aleist said, it seems."

"I see, that's cleared up my mind a bit... more importantly, why wasn't Fritz punished!? And then there's Rudel! Is it true he withdrew from the second term's individual tournament!?"

Luecke looked at Eunius' tagalongs, he found them looked around awkwardly. While they were talking about the events during his remedials, Eunius suddenly rushed over to him, or so Luecke concluded.

"You musclehead... It's your fault for being bound so long. With Fritz, he was acquitted in his meeting with princess Aileen who had snuck in. It's a real problem when an oblivious princess who knows nothing of the circumstances

seriously hears out the boy's drivel. I feel sorry for Rudel, but this year, he's attending the minimum amount of classes and spending the rest of his time on his little brother... looking after Chlust."

Hearing that and unable to accept, Eunius slammed his fist against the table. The students in the cafeteria turned to look at him, but minding them not, Eunius continued on.

"He could at least go to the individual tournament! More importantly, what does the academy intend by acquitting Fritz? Did they think we'd just stay silent?"

"It's the princess' order... Princess Fina was against it, and the academy was as well. Neither of them has stepped down... there isn't a soul who accepts it. But Rudel's lost interest in Fritz... in that case, then it's a right opportunity to get Chlust back on his feet he said and argued and argued."

Luecke laughed as he spoke. While Rudel had no interest in Fritz' punishment, he was thinking of Chlust. Rather than staying scared of Fritz forever, he wanted to give him an opportunity to get back up.

"When Fritz heard he wasn't interested and flew into a rage, it was a sight to behold. So he put out a condition... in exchange for fighting Chlust, he'll get to fight Rudel as well. Ain't it a laugh?"

"I'm not laughing! If that's what's made Rudel withdraw from the individual tournament, there's no way I can laugh! Can't he at least do something about the second term tournament? He can't keep uninterrupted supervision of Chlust forever, right?"

Luecke felt Eunius's irritation at the fact he couldn't fight Rudel. It was an emotion Luecke couldn't understand.

"If it's a match, you can ask him anytime, right? Chlust is going to graduate this year so he doesn't have any time."

"You just don't get it... fighting in the arena before a full house. There are fights that can only happen in that sort of space... it's a chance you only get once a year"

Even after hearing that, Luecke couldn't understand, so he gave up on

understanding. Even for Luekce, it was problematic that Rudel wasn't attending class. He had no friends he could talk about magic with. Rudel was a valuable existence who could respond to his jokes.

When Luecke joked around, no one would understand, and the man himself was seriously troubled. As Rudel was able to comprehend, for both Luecke and the people around him, Rudel was a precious treasure.

"You'll have to give up on this year. You've got Aleist, so it shouldn't be a problem."

"Wait, you're not taking part either?"

"Of course not. I'm busy with my magic research... it's not going as I hoped."

Luecke breathed a sigh as he thought over his experiments. Not Eunius, if it was Rudel, he'd be able to discuss it, he thought...



In the girls' dorm, Izumi seemed entranced by the katana Rudel had given her as a present. Pulling the blade in her room, Izumi's face flushed red. For someone who didn't know the circumstances, it was undoubtedly a scene to strike fear. Izumi's roommate called out to her.

"A present from Rudel? Even so, it's got no romance to it."

"Yeah, but it's a really, really nice katana. I can count on my hand the number of blades I've seen of this caliber. There's the fact that my house is a fallen one, but I really am happy. And while it seems it wasn't that expensive, this really is a nice find."

Izumi seemed delighted. While her roommate hadn't noticed it, the katana presented to Izumi was worth more than its weight in gold. While Rudel had managed to buy it with the money he saved in monster subjugations, it was a katana worth enough to build up a house.

"He said the blacksmith was a fellow oriental, so I'd like to meet him someday."

Chapter 47: The Sword Idiot, the Game Idiot, and...

With the incident that had embroiled Princess Fina a year before, the second term's fundamental curriculum outing was put under review, and it was altered to be a camping excursion. A safe campout by the riverbed, and Fina was moved and aroused as she took on the event. What was carried out in the midst of that two-night-three-day camp was the individual tournament of the upperclassmen.

From classes and relevant grade, the competitors were selected, and the students who received the qualifications to take part would carry out one-on-one matches over the course of two weeks, but... this year, the centerpiece Rudel had withdrawn. When you thought of how it was generally the fourth year students who took part, Rudel had plenty a chance at the title.

With Rudel's abstention, the final match came down to a pairing of Eunius against Aleist. The two who had won on with their abilities and social status, a rare sight in the finals, a battle of close combat unfolded. It was something so grand as if to clear away their resentment for all the past matches they had to hold back in.



"Give it up already, Aleist!"

Swinging his personal claymore-modeled wooden sword, Eunius launched a stream of attacks at Aleist. As the wooden swords met, they birther a violent sound alongside the impact. In contrast to Eunius' surprising finesse, Aleist clad his magic sword in wind and tried to brute force his way through.

"Why aren't you being sent flying!? Normally, you shouldn't even be able to lock blades with this bad boy! Unlike last year, I've been working hard to increase its output!!!"

Parrying Aleist's powerful sword strokes, Eunius fired off a strike with all his might. Receiving that blow from Eunius' blessed physique, Aleist was sent spiraling through the air... but even as he flew, Aleist fired consecutive shots of magic down.

“Dammit! I can’t lose until I can face him again... go to sleep!”

Blown back a little from the magic, Eunius looked at Aleist. But having recovered in that moment, Aleist managed to regain his footing, channeling new magic into his blade. His wooden sword let off a crack as lightning coursed down it.

“You’re not the only one who can’t lose!!!”

Seeing that, Eunius gave a ferocious laugh. Letting his own mana rest in his blade as well, both sides put all their might into that blow...



“And so you’re both hospitalized again... I can understand that the victor Eunius has serious injury, but Aleist really is weak to pain.”

Looking at the two resting on their beds, Luecke let out a sigh. Eunius who stood after an intense clash was declared the victor, while the unconscious Aleist became runner-up. Eunius glared at Luecke, while Aleist averted his eyes.

“When you didn’t even fight, you’re one to talk! More importantly, Rudel is at Chlust’s place again today...”

“Yeah, I was just a step away... I worked really hard, and yet... everyone around’s growing crazy strong.”

Ignoring Aleist’s murmurs, Luecke answered Eunius with only a nod. Over the long weekend and second term, Rudel only attended the bare minimum classes. He was chipping away his time training Chlust.

“Chlust was supposed to be strong, right? That Fritz wasn’t anything special, so did he really have to go that far?”

Aleist muttered the question he held from the two’s conversation. Hearing that, Eunius informed him.

“While you were away, Chlust was beaten black and blue. I don’t know if he’s strong or not, but that kid’s gone-case. Feels like his heart’s been shattered... if he sees Fritz, he starts shaking, and he can’t do a thing.”

“That’s probably why he’s being trained so harshly. Rudel’s too soft on his brother... he was soft on his sister too, right?”

“Erselica? I don’t think they really got along, but... (So that part’s changed too? In the game, Erselica got along better with Chlust than Rudel).”

“No it seems he has a sister called Lena from a different mother.”

Hearing that name from Luecke, Aleist tilted his head. Among the people from the game that used this world as its stage, he had never heard of the ‘character called Lena’. A hidden character who never appeared? Or a character who existed in setting alone? As he thought over such things,

“... Come to think of it, I’ve never heard of Fritz either. Did I overlook him because he was a background character? But there’s no way he’s background if he’s got connections to princess Aileen... I really should stop thinking about it like that. But in that case, the event that comes right after this will...”

“Aleist is mumbling to himself again... he says some incomprehensible things from time to time.”

Eunius looked over Aleist-mumbling in deep thought-and let out a sigh. And until Aleist’s friends came to visit, he continued thinking to himself.



Having become a third year, Millia went to see her elder sister Lilim. For an elf fallen to darkness, a full recovery was more difficult than she had imagined. Even if she stopped being a dark elf, her heart was corroded. As Millia stopped by her sister’s room on her day off, she asked in worry...

“Are you alright? It’s been quite some time, but...”

In contrast to Millia’s worry, Lilim nervously averted her eyes... having recently learned that Millia liked Rudel, she had begun to feel a sense of guilt towards her little sister. Having come so far, she finally realized she had been engaged to her sister’s crush, making things a little awkward.

“D-do you resent me after all? I got into an engagement with the guy you liked, what’s more, the engagement was broken off... but my forehead, he... kyah!”

While she was a little irritated, Millia had prepared an anti-Lilim trump card.

“G-glad you look well. But since the engagement was annulled, it’s

meaningless, right? And are you sure you didn't repulse him, showing off your dark form?"

"Y-you! To think my little sister would say such a thing! Though it's true I caused him some trouble..."

And sensing its contractor's feelings, the wind dragon apologized. For a contracted dragon, even at a distance, dragoons could communicate with their hearts.

'I'm sorry, Lilim... if only I'd breathed some flames when I defeated that ogre.. but even for me, black flames are impossible.'

"N-nooo! Even my own dragon's digging out my old wounds!! Just let me forget! I don't want to remember any of ittt!!!"

Seeing that, Millia laughed a bit inside, but her big sister's form had become a bit pitiable. To the elves who usually kept level-headed, dark elf periods were the greatest embarrassments of their lives. There were even some who threw down their lives over them, so family would usually take a set distance to heal the wounds of the heart.

Thinking there was no helping it, Millia conveyed some good news.

"Hey, about the third term's fundamental curriculum class tournaments, want to take some days off and come over to play? It seems a first year called Fritz got into a feud with the Arses House, so there's going to be a match after the tournament as well. Rudel is going to have a match against Fritz, and if it's at the academy, don't you think you'll be able to apologize to him for back then?"

"... Millia, what a wonderful little sister you are."

'I'll come as well. I have to give that child of man my thanks.'

"Though Cattleya-san's coming too."

As Millia said that with a smile, Lilim sensed something in the air.

"Cattleya is coming? She was working out on the border, but... can I even get a day off? Adjusting work schedules is a pain, you know? Taking a break without any considerable reason will be a problem and... n-no, it's not like I hate Rudel or anything"

“Don’t worry. The truth is, I was asked to come here. In the year below mine, there’s a girl from the white cat tribe, and that girl’s best friends with the princess. According to her, the princess wanted you to come just in case something happened.”

Lilim thought a bit before asking the reason. And there, she found out that Fina’s elder sister Princess Aileen was going to sneak in, and as this wasn’t an official visit, she would have fewer guards...

But that was just the surface reason. Fina knew her elder sister would be coming with plenty of high knights and guards. From an incident of times gone by, Fina knew her elder sister’s guard detail was rarely ever reduced. And if anything terrible was to happen, she wanted to gather those with favorable feelings towards Rudel.

Not that Lilim or Millia knew anything about that.

“Is that a job?”

“It’s not. I mean, there’s no money involved. But you’ll be able to meet Rudel. And if it’s the princess, Princess Fina’s request, then isn’t that enough of a reason?”

On those words, Lilim decided to take some days off for the class tournaments. Fina doubted anyone would go as far as to investigate the knights stopping by the academy on their days off, and that on her mind, Fina was also preparing for what was to come after the tournaments.

Chapter 48: Brothers, the Employer, and the Wife

“Hah, hah, why do I have to do something like this.”

Chlust did pushups as he glared at Rudel watching over him. Pushups if he opposed, pushups if he slacked off... A hell that went on regardless of holiday or school day, Chlust uttered complaints as he was left with no choice but to obey. He tried launching surprise attacks on Rudel a number of times, and sent letters home to beg for salvation.

But from the house, ‘Just do it’, was the only response he got back. When he got a letter saying he didn’t need to come home over the long weekend, Chlust turned quite despondent. On the other hand, a change was occurring in his home Arses House as well. While the fact he caused problems was the same as Rudel, the problems Chlust caused were related to the face of the house.

His conduct in abandoning the princess, and the fact he holed himself up after losing to a commoner... his parents had also abandoned him and chosen to prioritize Rudel, who was liked by the king. All the actions they had taken against Rudel suddenly inverted at the drop of a hat.

If Rudel wished it, they accepted and denied Chlust their help. Rudel himself had wondered whether his house would forcefully come to take him, but they were much more approving than he had expected, to an extent it was even creepy.

“There’s no time to the match, Chlust. Once you’re done with that, next is...”

Chlust had a match with Fritz right after the third term’s class tournaments. The thought alone frightened him.

“... Like hell I can win.”

Not to Rudel, he muttered to himself. Hearing that, Rudel made a conflicted expression. He was training Chlust up, but even if he strengthened his body, his heart remained in pieces. He had shouted at him a number of times to forcefully get him to train, but once talks turned to Fritz he would instantly cower.

“You’re fine with ending this at a loss?”

Chlust wouldn’t answer Rudel’s question.

“I won’t tell you to win. But don’t run away... if you run, I definitely won’t forgive you.”

Chlust couldn’t answer to that one either. He simply continued his pushups in silence.



The second term over, it was just about time for the holiday to end... Basyle told Rudel she would resign. While Rudel tried to stop her, once he heard out her reasons, he gave his approval.

“There isn’t anything left for me to teach you. And Vargas proposed to me... the plan’s to get married after his graduation. So I think I’m going to quit my job this year.”

“R-really! Then we’ve got to celebrate. I have to think up a gift...”

The sudden development did surprise Rudel, but as her employer, he did want to congratulate her. Basyle had seriously been a big help when it came to magic, and Vargas was the first friend he made since he enrolled, his big brother-esque comrade. As Rudel thought, Basyle proposed a certain thing.

“In that case, I do have a single request. I want to get my husband the tool of his trade, a ‘shield’. Ever since he broke it last year, he hasn’t been able to get one of his own.”

Basyle knew Rudel would do something even if he told him not to give gifts or celebration, so she made a request for Vargas’ shield. In that case, she could end the matter with only one gift for the two of them. She thought.

“That’s fine and all, but what about for you, Basyle?”

“Rudel-sama, the shield of a shield knight is expensive. That’s more than enough for the both of us, so...”

Basyle spoke with a broad smile. Rudel also thought over this and that... and nodded. He thought to arrange for a shield at once, but Rudel had no weapon dealers or blasmiths under his wing. To be more precise, it never occurred to

him to use his house's connections. And the one he decided to ask was...

"Not Eunius, but me? ... Sure enough, the Halbades House has a few proficient ones, but a shield, eh..."

Rudel consulted with Luecke who had just returned from vacation. But to the Halbades House that valued knowledge over military exploits, it wasn't impossible to prepare a shield knight's shield, but it couldn't be recommended. If he wanted a weapon no matter what, it would end up being an expensive, ornamented decoration piece.

Luecke wanted to answer his friend's request. There, he thought of something.

"If you want a skilled blacksmith, I do know a guy. It's not like I'm employing him, but I did have him make a few of my magic research tools so I can guarantee his skill."

"Can he make shields as well?"

"He's a former blacksmith, so you don't need to worry. So are you using the shield? Or is it going to be Chlust?"

Luecke immediately started drafting up an order letter to the smith.

"No, it's for Vargas. He's going to marry Basyle soon, so I wanted to send it as a gift. Vargas is going to be stationed in the outer regions, and I think Basyle will be following him?"

Luecke's hand stopped as he thought for a bit. Thinking of Vargas' personality, and instantaneous decision-making, as well as the fact a magic specialist like Basyle was becoming his wife...

"I see... then I'll also chip in for that gift."

"I don't think that'll work, Luecke."

"No, it's not a problem. The reason being Vargas' employer is going to be me."

While Rudel tilted his head, Luecke started writing a letter addressed to his own house as well. There's a talented shield knight, and I want to hire him, he wrote. In his head, he put together his own magic theories and the existence of

shield knights. To use the spells that required complex magic circles he had been drafting up for some time, it would be easier if someone carried a tool inscribed with the sigils from the start.

“There are few shield knights in existence. They don’t stand out, and it’s difficult for them to earn medals... but just hiring one would be a problem. If they’re of no use, then there’s no point in keeping them.”

“That’s right.”

“But what if I have one hold a shield inscribed with a magic circle, and have them take charge of magic? With the leadership skills to change formation in an instant... Rudel, the era has come for the value of shield knights to change!”

“Y-yeah!”

Rudel had a general idea of what Luecke was trying to do, but he felt some pity for Vargas who was essentially becoming Luecke’s test subject. Since it was Luecke, he wouldn’t do anything life-threatening, Rudel imagined the tests and training would be harsh indeed.

Between being appointed on the border and taking service under an archduke, the latter was definitely more welcoming. With that in mind, Rudel mulled over what was best for Vargas.



Around that time, Basyle had gone out to town to prepare a gift for Rudel. In the previous year’s events, Rudel had lost his sword, and even now, he didn’t possess one for his own personal use. That wasn’t a problem on school grounds, but thinking of what was to come, Basyle concluded it best he had one and decided to find one for him.

She went to consult the old man who bought and sold goods, but,

“A sword? No matter what type it is, the price will be on another level if you want a good product. You’ve never used a sword before so you might not know, but melting down a mana-imbued iron ore alongside monster bones is the trend these days. If you want to do it that way, the price will jump up... what’s your budget?”

Basyle presented her funding on her fingers. The old man breathed a sigh.

“As if you could buy a sword for a future archduke with that kind of money.”

“Can’t you do something about it!?”

“I do want to do something to congratulate you on your wedding, but with that money... you’ll have to make due with a normal sword.”

As they carried out that exchange, a single man entered the store. As the door opened, the bell’s jingle resounded throughout, followed by the broken words of a black haired orient.

“Heard there was rare monster tusk, in this shop... could you show me?”

“Yeah, I do have one lying around. Are you a foreigner? I was troubled because I couldn’t find any buyers. If you’ll take it, I’ll make it cheap.”

As he was that, the old man sent a look at Basyle. Basyle understood it was the ‘tusk of back then’ she had sold to the man.

“That is right. I’m working as a smith in a town near the border. I wanted to work with my partner to make a weapon that could attract some visitors before we opened up a shop. I have been on a journey, looking all over for some interesting materials, and my search has brought me here.”

Hearing that, Basyle had an idea. Open up shop, meaning he wasn’t that famous yet. In that case, he would want the prestige... thinking that, Basyle offered the proposal.

“Hey, Mr. Blasksmith, would you hear me out...”

And like that, Rudel’s sword was to be made with the ‘tusk of back then’ as its base. It was from the first black monster Rudel met, and an item with a deep connection to him.

Chapter 49: The Younger Brother, the Boy, and the Mad Princesses

There was barely any time left in the third semester. The academy was in a flurry with graduation and preparations to accept the next batch of new students. And the time had come for the Arses house to fulfill its promise with Fritz. The first princess Aileen dropped by the school, and alongside her in the noble visitor room, Fina also ended up watching the duels.

There were more students gathered in the arena than there had been for the class tournament, the guest seats largely divided between noble and commoner. The students rooting for Fritz cheered loudly as they sent their encouragement, while jeers and heckles flew towards Chlust standing opposite to him.

“Rip him a new one Fritz!!!”

“Chlust, quite shaking and say something already.”

“Don’t lose to some noble halfwit!”

The student body held an overwhelming majority of commoner students. In the noble side audience seats, the young nobles gathered around Luecke and Eunius of the three lords as they loathsomely watched over the situation.

To Eunius’ side, Aleist sat with his friend, while Izumi was next to Luecke. Rudel was standing near Chlust, and as he was next to the ring, he didn’t have an audience seat.

“Chlust sure is the popular one.”

Luecke read his book as he gave a sarcastic comment on the arena’s atmosphere.

“No, you sure they aren’t just taking out their anger against all of us? Did you know? Because this guy beat up Fritz, people are thinking Chlust had him beat the hell out of him in his place.”

“Y-you’re wrong! I definitely did beat him up, that had nothing to do with Fritz and Chlust.”

After gazing uninterestedly over the ring, Eunius pointed at the restless Aleist to his side and laughed. Aleist hurriedly gave an excuse. Izumi listened in on that exchange as she watched Rudel looking at Chlust.

“I hope this ends without incident, but...”



In the noble visitor room, the two princesses each gazed at the men they were rooting for. Aileen gave a warm smile to Fritz standing on the ring, while Fina expressionlessly stared at Rudel outside it. The high knight guards and headmaster also watched over the students from there.

“Ah, Fritz-sama... he’s definitely going to win, right?”

While Aileen confirmed it with the high knight to her side, Fina,

“Sophina, by your judgement, who do you say will win?”

“Yes, I believe the commoner student called Fritz holds the advantage. It seems Chlust-sama has trained, but they started off from different foundations. I believe it would have been difficult for him to catch up in a space less than a year.”

“I see...”

(Not that I care. Honestly, it’s no problem to me whether Chlust or Fritz loses. As long as master gets through his fight safely, then all’s well! Even so, she’s totally lost her integrity... even if it’s my sister we’re talking about, isn’t that a huge problem?)

But hearing Sophina’s words, Aileen asked for her evaluation on Rudel. She held a high evaluation of the high knight who stayed at the academy as Fina’s guard, and she wanted to confirm Fritz’s victory. But...

“Yonder high knight, by your eye, who shall win the following match? I’m sure that man is strong, but Fritz-sama has trained considerably.”

“If I may, your majesty, my lowly opinion is but a...”

While Sophina was hard-pressed for the right words, the expressionless Fina laughed internally as she enjoyed the situation.

(Just say it! Tell her how you rate her beloved Fritz-sama! When he was

beaten up by Aleist, and Aleist lost to Eunius, tell her how master is the strongest! Well, if you do, she'll remember your face and name and harass you!)



Atop the ring, the two competitors faced one other, exchanging glares through the deafening cheers. To be more precise, in contrast to Fritz' glare, Chlust was averting his eyes and shaking a little.

"Do you know how long I've waited for this day? This resentment I've built from all my childhood, oblivious to how your people may suffer under the brutal taxation, I'll teach you nobles playing around a lesson."

Fritz took a stance with his wooden sword, and Chlust prepared himself as well. Once the referee standing between them signaled the start, Fritz stepped in and lowered his sword at Chlust.

"L-like I care!"

Chlust blocked the lowered blade, but the next attack was already ready for him. Fritz swung his wood sword freely in all directions, and Chlust could only take it.

He blocked and dodged, but above all of that, Fritz attacks would reach his body... Rudel simply watched it happen.

"Both you and your brother are trash! Just how many suffering people do you think there are in your lands."

With those words, Fritz' lowered sword knocked Chlust off his feet. Letting his sword leave his hands, Chlust collapsed and Fritz gave pursuit. Not only with his sword, he started kicking him with his foot.

"What's that? Say something! To all those suffering, tell them I'm sorry, or it was my fault!"

In only a few minutes from the start, Chlust was in tatters... but without a word, he stood to his feet. He went to pick up his sword only to be kicked by Fritz again. It was a one-sided development. The nobles lost their initial cheers, watching the match in silence.

“... Apologize? Then you apologize first.”

“What?”

Chlust clung to Fritz’ foot as he spoke. With rough breath, and with a voice barely anyone could hear...

“I-I’m telling you to apologize for calling my brother trash.”

In that moment, he was kicked again. What flashed through Chlust’s mind in that instant was his brother Rudel. When everyone abandoned him, Rudel was the only one who stayed to the end.

(My friends and classmates all look down on me. Everyone who sees me calls me trash... even father and mother won’t properly reply to my letters. At the end of the end, my brother’s the only one who never abandoned me!)

Since he lost to Fritz, everyone around had abandoned Chlust. But Rudel alone chipped away all his time to train him. And even now, he was watching over his match.

(Why... do I have to be so pitiful? I can’t let myself look any more pitiful in front of my brother.)

Chlust desperately kept a grip on Fritz’ leg. Kicked with Fritz’ free leg and smacked with his sword, the match carried on. Plenty of Chlust’s blood flew in that match, and the screams that came weren’t small in numbers.



In the noble visitor room, Fina looked at her excited sister Aileen with cold eyes. Once she knew everyone’s attention was focused on Fritz’ achievements, she expressionlessly sighed at the ring she looked down upon.

(This isn’t the fight of some hero of justice. How laughable that my sister’s little prince charming is acting like a common thug. It’s such a turnaround I can only laugh.)

That match that was practically the strong suppressing the weak, to Fina, it seemed almost as if it signified the power relation of the nobles oppressing the commoners. If looked on from one side, Fritz was righteous, and the Arses House was evil. But it seen through another’s eyes... from standpoint of the

country's law, the Arses House was the victim, and Fritz was an assailant.

In Courtois ruled by the royals and nobles, Fritz who pulled his bow against the grand noble Arses House was a criminal. And the reason he pulled his bow wasn't one the other nobles or royal line could accept so easily. The lords ruling over us have no qualifications to rule, was what he was saying...

(Even if the Arses House is a hive of scum and villainy, your Fritz on a white horse's methods are plain awful. From the air in this arena, it doesn't look like he has enough charisma, and he isn't looking at himself objectively. Without any talented people to compensate for his faults, Fritz Charming is nothing to fear.)

Just as Fina thought, the surroundings were pulling back at this one-sided match. No one could think of Fritz' fight as justice. Those who couldn't read the mood would eventually shout their jeers onto the quiet ring. But even so, the atmosphere was on a downward spiral.

(More importantly, that black hair! I hate her... sealing my master's petting with just a word, that damn vixen that's enraptured my master in her cage is, well, she's cute, so I guess 'black hair' is enough. Anyways, I hate you, black hairrr!!! More than Fritz, this kingdom has to do something about black hair, or it will lose a national treasure!!!)

Fina gazed expressionlessly at Izumi, who was sitting with concern to Luecke's side...



The referee stepped in to stop Fritz' attacks against Chlust, who could no longer move. Confirming Chlust's unconscious state, the ref went on to declare Fritz' victory.

"Get up here, Rudel!"

As Fritz took a stance with his wood sword and cried out, Rudel draped the collapsed Chlust over his back and left the ring. That action irritated Fritz considerably, but,

"I'm going to carry my little brother. Just rest or something in the meantime."

On Rudel's line, displeased as he was, he stepped down from the ring and took some rest.

Rudel left the ring with Chlust over his back. Regaining consciousness over his shoulder, Chlust understood the fact that he lost.

"... Haha, after I tried so hard, I still lose in the end? I really have no talent."

As Chlust derided himself, he shed tears of frustration. Irritated at himself for not being able to land a single blow, and even after his brother was mocked, he chastised himself for only being able to cling onto a leg.

"When the time comes, I'll just face another unsightly loss, and drop dead in some ditch on the border."

Rudel silently carried him through his regretful sobs. But the place he brought him wasn't the infirmary. He brought him to the arena's guest seats, where Luecke and Eunius sat.

"I'm sorry, could you clear some space?"

Rudel pleaded to Luecke and Eunius.

"Rudel... why'd you bring him here?"

While Eunius sighed, he made some space between him and Luecke, and matching him, everyone in his row moved down as if sliding. And after he sat Chlust-beaten and red around the eyes-in that space, Rudel leapt down from the audience seats to the ring.

Fed up, Eunius called out to the dazed Chlust sitting to his side. It was an action carried out after sensing the awkward air.

"Have a good look at your big brother's fight. Awkward as he is, he's trying to do what he can for you... I won't tell you to get along, but at the very least, can't you recognize him?"

Hearing those words, he tried to say something, but swallowing those words, Chlust looked down at his brother and Fritz on the ring.

"I doubt it'll be an interesting match."

Luecke closed the book he was reading, turning his eyes to the two facing

each other. Izumi sitting to his side also directed her eyes. But Aleist alone seemed caught up in those words.

“Not interesting? Fritz is fairly strong. I heard he trained a lot after I beat the living daylights out of him, you know?”

“Hah, that’s why you can never overcome your walls. When you’re ridiculously blessed, that’s the part that’s no good...”

Eunius breathed a sigh at Aleist. While he possessed magic that surpassed the realm of humanity, Aleist wasn’t using it productively at all. Those around sent fed-up glances, holding much the same opinion themselves.

“W-what’s with all of you!?”

Chapter 50: Brothers, the Boy, and the Fight

In the arena's noble visitor room, the princesses gazed at Rudel and Fritz, who were facing and speaking to one another. While the princesses were rooting for different people, they were both quite serious. Aileen gripped her hands in front of her chest, while Fina expressionlessly thought...

(Fritz is done for!!! Now get your ass handed to you by master. And it's getting to be a right pain, so drop my sister's evaluation of you while you're at it! We have no calling for a Fritz who isn't even fluffy!)

Before the serious princesses, the surrounding high knights held conflicted thoughts. While they didn't let it show on their faces, Aileen's guards were displeased with the commoner Fritz' speech and attitude. As their princess loved him dearly, they could never say it.

Fina's guard Sophina had gotten a better grasp of Fina's personality lately, and she felt conflicted as well. It was impossible to imagine what Fina was thinking, as she never asserted herself, but there was no way it was anything decent. And seeing Rudel's serious face as he met eyes with Fritz, Sophina found her face heating up.

The hall had somewhat recovered from its previous stillness, and cheers were beginning to rise.



"Don't lose to some upperclassman, Fritz!"

"Show him the difference in your ability!"

"Teach him who's the strongest, Fritz!"

The underclassmen jeered while the upperclassmen hesitated to speak. A majority of the third years recalled their previous selves, growing irritated as they heard jeers directed at Rudel's class. The second years knew Rudel had beaten Aleist, and they knew even now Rudel got along well with the second princess, so they didn't know what to say.

"Can you hear these cheers for me? ... These are the voices of the world,

senpai.”

Before the match began, the two spoke a bit. The ref read the mood, and thinking a little would be alright, he kept quiet.

“By shaping your mana, you can invoke a mock magic sword. And strengthening it further, you use it for defense... I looked into it. So I’ll tell you... I’ve already reached and surpassed you.”

“I see. More importantly, I give thanks in regards to my brother. If it’s like this, it seems Chlust can still get back up.”

Rudel didn’t show much interest in Fritz’ words. But he did have some gratitude when it came to his brother, so he gave some simple thanks. But that attitude irritated Fritz.

And the referee declared the starting sign.

Coincident with that, mana covered Fritz’ body, and a large quantity of it flowed down his sword. At his form as if he was clad in sword and armor of light, the arena raised cries of surprise. At those armaments of magic, the underclassmen were excited as they grew convinced of their victory.

“This is my full power! I didn’t even need to show it to your brother.”

Fritz turned his wood sword to Rudel and cried out. But Rudel held his own sword in his right hand without taking a stance. Let alone a stance, he didn’t even try to flow magic into the wood.

“You plan to make an excuse that you lost because you didn’t get serious? There really is no helping you noble trash... in that case, repent all you want on an infirmary bed!!!”

In an instant, Fritz closed the distance and lowered his sword. But in that same instant, his body was slammed against the ring, Rudel’s right foot resting on his chest. No, trampling into it.

“Then use your full power to endure this.”

Before Fritz could comprehend Rudel’s words, he felt an immense impact through his body. And just as blood spat from his mouth, he lost consciousness.



Seeing the match that ended a few seconds from its start, Luecke and Eunius showed different expressions. Luecke was making a troubled face.

“Hah, it really wasn’t an interesting match at all. He really should think about entertaining the guests some more... The high-level fighters might roar, but like this, I doubt the underclassmen will understand what happened.”

After easily moving his body to avoid Fritz’ haphazard attack, Rudel had used his left hand to grab Fritz’ arm before tripping him up. Rather than falling, Fritz was slammed into the ring, and once Rudel pinned him down with his right foot... he commenced some sort of attack.

It was an attack intense enough to hollow out a round crater centered around the two of them... Fritz spat up blood from his mouth, lost consciousness, and the match was over.

“Interesting... that guy really is the best.”

In contrast, Eunius’ ferocious smile caused Aleist and Chlust sitting to his sides to draw back. While even Eunius didn’t exactly understand what Rudel had done, that last attack was powerful enough for a cold sweat to flow down his spine. The friend he recognized had grown so strong while he wasn’t looking.

“I can’t wait for next year’s second term.”

While Eunius said that and rejoiced, Aleist sitting to his side averted his eyes as he held his head.

(D-dafaq!? I had no idea you could attack like that, and wait, what the hell was that!? The way I’m going, I won’t be able to win against Rudel... what should I...)

Aleist felt depressed that the difference in ability had grown outside of his knowledge. Chlust looked at his brother standing over the ring, before losing consciousness from the relief. As he fell, Izumi stood from her guest seat to support him up.



There were two disguised dragoons mixed in among the crowds. A little dressed up, Lilim and Cattleya weren’t able to hide their surprise at the match

between Rudel and Fritz. It was only natural he had grown stronger after he'd fought them, but this was a growth rate you could even call abnormal.

The two of them contained their excitement over Rudel as they turned their eyes towards the noble visitor room. Sending their voices over to their dragons resting on campus, they got their preparations in order.

'That child of man, no, Rudel won, it seems. Are you happy, contractor?'
'Like for real!? I only heard the voices, but that was an instakill, right!? Just how freakishly weak was his opponent? What's more, after asserting his dominance so long in the match before... how uncool!'

They gave bitter smiles at their own dragons' responses. Lilim's dragon who would always call her contractor now called Rudel by name. Meanwhile, Cattleya's dragon had a bad mouth.

"Now then, is the princess alright?"

Cattleya looked between the noble visitor room and Rudel on the ring as she posed Lilim the question. They didn't particularly expect the princess to take any unreasonable actions, but they were called just in case, so they had to keep cautious.

Atop the ring, Fritz was loaded onto a stretcher as the arena filled with an indescribable air. Those who couldn't comprehend the sheer difference in ability scattered cries of 'coward' and the upperclassmen had begun to boo those ignorant underclassmen.

"Doesn't look like she's giving the signal. But I did get to see something nice."

Looking at the visitor room, Lilim recalled Rudel's gallant figure as her face flushed red. Cattleya breathed a sigh as she turned to her senior.

"You're not engaged anymore, you know..."



Over in the noble visitor room, the two dragoons seemed so worried about, a bit of a ruckus was breaking out.

"T-that one didn't count! I can't accept a match like that!"

Unable to admit Fritz' loss, Aileen was raising a protest. But the result showed

the unconscious Fritz' complete loss. It wasn't a loss through luck or ill fate. It was a complete loss of ability.

"No matter how many times you repeat it, the result won't change, sister."
(Of course, it's impossible for your prince to defeat my master. No matter what you say, master is the man who'll become my husband in my pursuit of fluffadise... huh? Wait. Then isn't master a prince as well? How about 'Sovereign of Fluffadise'? Oh, I like the sound of that!)

Fina's expressionless, emotionless tone only made Aileen unnecessarily more irritated. As she knew(?) her sister's peculiar condition, she didn't stick in her mouth, but she felt great irritation.

"... I definitely won't forgive him."

No one could hear Aileen's mutter. Fina only stared expressionlessly at Rudel on the ring. Yet Aileen's mutter that even the high knights around her couldn't hear contained an emotion you could call conflicted.



The third term safely (?) come to and end. Discharged, Chlust had made his way to the academy gates. A carriage from the Arses House had come for him. It's an embarrassment, so don't go to the graduation ceremony, his parents had told him, and this carriage was one that would take him straight to the outer regions of the country.

From his loneliness and shamefulness, Chlust was full of anxiety, but even so, a few people had come to see him off. Starting with Luecke and Eunius of the Three Lords, there was Vargas and Basyle, Aleist and Fina surrounded by her guards. But Rudel wasn't there.

"H-hey, why isn't the big brother Rudel here? This is too awkward, and I have no idea what to talk about."

Aleist translated the atmosphere into words, but everyone only averted their eyes without offering any salvation. Everyone around had come thinking Rudel would be there. They had never even considered it might come to this.

Time passed in silent, and being mindful, some did try calling out to Chlust, but the conversations would never last. After such a situation continued a

while, Rudel appeared alongside Izumi, a basket in hand. Aleist and those around him felt a bit irritated at the rosy air the two of them let off.

“You’re late, Rudel!”

On Luecke’s voice, Rudel scratched his head and apologized.

“S-sorry. I never thought he’d be going off without a stop at our house. I realized he might grow hungry on his way to the border, so I made some sandwiches in the dining hall.”

Rudel held out the basket. Izumi carried one as well, and she went to hand it to the servants driving the carriage. Rudel’s basket went over to Chlust.

“If Izumi didn’t help me out, it would’ve taken even more time. I’m glad I met her along the way.”

“If he had just told me, I’d have had it ready. Rudel acts on a whim too often.”

Hearing their conversation, why aren’t they going out yet? Some thought. Curse you black haaaaiirrr!!! Thought another.

“I-I don’t mind taking it.”

Chlust still didn’t know how to interact with his brother, and even now he used an abusive tone as he took the basket. Rudel called over to him.

“You better survive, Chlust. Otherwise your dreams’ll never come true.”

Still not knowing what to say, Chlust made off towards the carriage. He had spent the day before thinking up what he wanted to convey, but he couldn’t get it across at all. The surroundings smiled as they looked over those siblings. But where Chlust was headed was the border with the empire, a danger zone rife with monsters.

Perhaps they would never meet again. Everyone thought so, calling over to Chlust and saw off the carriage. Once the carriage had passed through the gate, Chlust leaned his body out the window and cried out.

“T-thank you brother!!!”

Until his brother’s carriage was out of sight, Rudel continued waving his hand.



Noon came around, and once the carriage stopped for a break, Chlust opened the basket and took out a sandwich. There was also a small canteen inside, alongside misshapen sandwiches and some of tidy shape.

“H-hmm. These misshapen ones are definitely the ones my brother made.”

Chlust said as he bit into one.

“H-how terrible... it’s way too salty.”

Biting on in a trance, as Chlust washed it down with the green tea in the canteen, tears were flowing from his eyes.

“Thank you... thank you, Rudel.”

Weeping and eating, he made just a bit of a happy face as he recalled Rudel’s words.

“I’ll survive, and next time I’ll say thank you to your face... I’ll definitely survive...”

Chapter 51: Extra - Surpass Marty 4

A room of the girls' dorm only nobles greater than the great houses could use; Fina, the room's owner hugged her knees on the bed as she silently mumbled to herself. Ever since Rudel's petting had been sealed, her fluffy life suddenly took a distance from her ideals.

At this point, only her best friend, the white cat tribe's Mii ever came to her room the play. Black cat Ness said Rudel was her only master, and wouldn't let Fina pet her. She also enjoyed Ness' cold attitude, and she had no complaints, but she had begun to yearn for the heavenly times she experienced when Rudel was here.

"That accursed black hair... if only she wasn't there, I'd be walking the path of fluffy conquest right around now!"

As Fina continued mumbling expressionlessly, her guard captain Sophina watched, drawing back within.

(What should we do. Both of this country's princesses are done for. One of them's obsessed with a commoner, while the other is definitely not paying the slightest attention to the country. We've only got two of them... we've only got two princesses, dammit!)

"That's right! I'll just kill her and take master for my own!"

"P-princess! You can't. Rudel-sama loves Izumi dearly."

Mii tried to soothe her, but Fina took out the knife tucked away in her desk. It was a poisoned knife she had once asked Mii to purchase for her.

"T-that's no good, princess!"

"Don't stop me, Mii. This is something I have no choice but to do!"

"Give it a rest, princess!"

Mii gently tried to talk her out of it, but her guard Sophina was cold.

"Why're you trying put on the good girl act? Looking at my master like a maiden in love at your age! Just notice it already!! If you want to flirt with

master, your only choice is to assist me in constructing master's harem! If we do, then I can do this and that to Mii and Ness and... crap, I'm drooling. Anyhow! If you help me, I'll choose you as one of the mistresses, so lend me your hand!"

As Fina expressionlessly emphasized it, everyone present stepped back. Sophina imagined such a future in her head...

"B-but there are some things you just don't do!"

"You considered it, didn't you? You got your body hot as you imagined _____ master, you _____!"

She had hit the nail on the head, and Sophina had no words to return. But her mouth was too foul for a princess. She tried to caution her when everyone in the room suddenly collapsed, a black fog enveloping them.



"H-huh? What was I... wait, princess!"

Once Sophina regained consciousness, she found Fina collapsed on the floor showing the whites of her eyes. Gripping the toy knife she thought was poisoned in her hands, black hairrrr... she muttered in her sleep as she lay. Sophina found her a bit scary, but she had confirmed the princess' safety.

"Thank god. She's just unconscious. But I'd better take her to the infirmary... eh!?"

Her relief from confirming Fina's safety was quite the transient thing... Fina suddenly leapt to her feet.

"Huh? What was I trying to do?"

"P-princess, are you alright?"

Similarly, Mii regained consciousness as well. And Mii looked at the knife Fina held in her hands before bursting into tears and apologizing.

"I-I'm sorry, princess! That knife is a fake. I-I... didn't know where they sold a knife laced with poison, and I ended up giving you the toy knife the shop person pushed onto me!"

The high knights checked everything going in, so it was impossible to bring any hazardous material. They had already confirmed that toy knife and the high knights were well aware of it. The only one who didn't know was Fina. But seeing Mii crying and apologizing, Fina spoke.

"It's alright, Mii. I'm sorry for making you go through such painful memories... I asked the impossible of you and made you cry."
(How cute, how cute... as punishment, I won't let you sleep tonight. You'll be purring from dusk to dawn!!!)

Having forgotten about Izumi, Fina moved just as her desires willed it.

"Princess! Before that, let's go to the infirmary!"
(And the psychiatrist while we're at it.)



Outside the princess' room, a black shadow crept up from the floor only to hide in the shadows of the corridor. Noticing something was amiss in the room, the high knights outside had entered, so they never noticed.

'T-those were some feelings so pitch black it was even repulsive. But with this, I've built up some power... Rudel, just you wait. This time, I'll kill you and return the story to its proper path... erk, I feel sick. This mix of fluff and lust is churning up my stomach!'

The shadow fled the girls' dorm in pain. Born from Cattleya, taken up by Lilim, and even now that black mist was gathering up hatred to try and kill Rudel. Due to the fact it had only gathered hate from women, it was starting to take on the shape and voice of a girl, and even now it hated him.



Around that time, Rudel was in the infirmary. He was paying Vargas a visit. The graduation ceremony and parties over, in this short time where the fifth years could take it easy, Vargas was hospitalized. Traces of a blow to the face alongside bandages wrapped around his body left him as quite a pitiful sight.

"You get injured quite often, Vargas."

"Not as much as you."

After the party ended, Vargas received an attack from the other boys. There were various reasons. His marriage to the Arses House servant Basyle had been decided, and on top of that, his appointment to the knight brigade of the Three Lord's Halbades House had been finalized.

Not only did he make a wife of the beautiful older-sister-like Basyle all the boys looked up to, he had been promoted to a level a commoner could only dream of. While it was an employment with his abilities taken into account, normally, he would have to build up some experience first. A few teachers took part in the attack as well.

"More importantly, hear me out! Your shield's finally been completed! Luecke's bringing it over right now, so I just can't wait,"

"Hah!? I didn't hear anything about that!"

"It was my request."

Sitting next to Vargas' bed, Basyle smiled as she answered. Basyle had already given Rudel her gift sword. It was a fine piece using exceedingly valuable materials, and Rudel had rejoiced and felt bad and made merry some more.

"Y-you did?"

As Vargas' face flushed, Luecke entered the sick room. But his hands were empty.

"Mh, so Rudel's here."

"Yeah, I wanted to see the completed shield. I heard it was something amazing."

Hearing that, I know, right? Right? Said Luecke as he happily beckoned in the servants outside the sick room. Thereupon... three servants brought in a full set of armor alongside a large shield.

"W-wait a second. Isn't that armor?"

As Vargas spoke up, Luecke made a face as if to say, 'what're you talking about?' as he answered.

"Of course it is. A set of armor from my Halbades House's official knight brigade, and a special magic insignia shield I drafted up myself. It's an amazing

piece... just listen to this, it makes use of five special metals to make for a light and sturdy finish! It cost a bit of a pretty penny, but it was worth it.”

Hearing that, Rudel spoke.

“Huh? So you used five after all? Didn’t you say five would go over your budget last time?”

“There was no helping it back then. I planned to hire him personally, but ever since father’s interest was piqued, we’ve decided to take him on as an official knight. Because of that, our funding’s increased, and we’ve even got around to modifying the armor.”

Haring Rudel and Luecke’s conversation, Basyle and Vargas’ smiles stiffened up. The monetary sum that gradually came out was on another level. The two of them were finally starting to understand Rudel really was a high ranking noble. And at that moment, Eunius raced into the sickroom.

“Hey, no one told me! Why is Vargas entering that beansprout knight brigade at Luecke’s place!?”

As Eunius burst into the room out of breath, Luecke coldly shot him down.

“While you lot were sitting back on your trophies, my house has been gathering worthy personnel for our knight brigade. And your place’s muscle-headed knights don’t need any talent.”

“Bastard, you really are a detestable welp! Shall we settle the score here and now?”

While their mouths were smiling, their eyes were completely serious. Basyle and Vargas sent eyes asking for salvation to Rudel as he smiled over Luecke and Eunius.

“I hope you two find happiness.”

But the message didn’t get across. He blessed them with an extremely nice smile, making it so they couldn’t say anymore. But to the two of them, a goddess of salvation did indeed descend.

“What are you doing in the infirmary? You’re troubling everyone, so you’d better stop. Rudel, don’t just watch, you have to stop them.”

As a fed-up Izumi entered the infirmary, Rudel quickly reacted and apologized. There, the two of them reluctantly stopped their fight. Vargas and Basyle were relieved, but in the sickroom's entrance, a familiar individual was glaring at Izumi.

“W-when you’re just black haiirrrr!!!”

“What are you doing, princess!? Hurry up and get yourself examined!”

Looking at Fina’s expressionless face, Vargas and Basyle prayed for Izumi’s happiness.

Chapter 52: Extra - Spring Sure is Nice

The young elf girl Millia's long, green hair swayed as she walked. As she looked at the sky out the window, she could feel a warm sunlight, and the wind she received from that open window also carried with it a sense of kindness. Her third year had ended, and as the new freshmen came in, Millia felt she had somewhat moved up in the world.

"I'm not sure if it was long or short. More importantly, this result sheet is a surprise."

As Millia walked down the school building corridor, she took a sidelong glance at the bulletin board before stopping to think.

The third year final comprehensive evaluation posted up listed the names of the top ten students. And surprisingly enough, Rudel was first, with Luecke and Eunius coming after him. The comprehensive evaluation was something decided from academics, practicals and evaluations in challenges. While Eunius was devastatingly bad at academics, the fact he was there was largely due to his top marks on practicals and challenges.

And Luecke's academics were perfect, but his grades in practicals were only a little better than average. Still amazing, while they were each first in their respective fields, it was because of Rudel that they were forced into second and third as a whole.

His sword skills fell short of Eunius. His academics and magic fell short of Luecke. But Rudel's comprehensive evaluation was ranked first. You could say he had few weak points. His course was a rare one among upperclassmen, whose grades usually inclined towards civil or military matters.

Izumi and Millia's names weren't on it, but their grades weren't bad by any means. Millia encouraged herself as she took her eyes off the posted sheet and continued down the corridor.

(When I first met him, I thought he was just a stupid noble son... is he seriously aiming to become a dragoon? With those grades, his future's practically assured.)

Their first meeting was the worst. It all started when she mocked Rudel for reading a picture book, so there was no helping it. And because of that, even now she couldn't shorten the distance to him.

Looking outside from the open window, she spotted students of her year calling out to the students. The one greeting those inexperienced freshmen were Aleist and his friends.

"How about it? I'll show you around the school, so do you want to get some tea along the way?"

"Just a little tea, alright?"

... He was hitting on them. Aleist, who was treated as a monster when he first enrolled was now hiding in Rudel's shadow. But from their usual conduct and speck, all four of them were treated as problem children. For Aleist, he had become much easier to talk to than he was at first, so he had her pity.

"A dragon idiot, a magic idiot, and a sword idiot... then what does that make Aleist? Rather, no one here reads the mood, and no one ever tried to. To achieve top grades despite all that..."

Giving a grumble, Millia started back down the corridor as she remembered all that had unfolded. At first, she had thought the enrollment of the Three Lords' eldest sons would be a pain. But now, there were plenty of laughs to be had when their stories were brought up, and Aleist was occasionally treated as something of a mascot character.

Luecke had destroyed the facilities in his magical practicals, and Eunius went too far in his sword duels. Aleist was occasionally lacking in common sense Or so his actions seemed to say. But!

"Rudel's the biggest problem child after all."

Participating in a magic experiment, he helped out in destroying the facility, in his duel with Eunius, he wrecked the arena, and his problematic behavior showed an even greater lack of common sense than Aleist. On top of that, his grades were great, and he was serious in class, so the professors found it difficult to caution him. His lack of any ill will only made it needlessly worse.

"Guess there's a paper-thin difference between genius and something..."



Aleist was keeping his friend's pickups company. Honestly, he enjoyed playing around with his friend more than actually hitting on girls, and he wasn't that proactive in it. As Aleist turned his eyes to the school building, the elf girl Millia was walking down the corridor. Her green hair swaying, her walking figure was somewhat beautiful.

As he grew enraptured, his friend who failed in his pickup sent over a berating voice.

"What's this, Aleist? You got a thing for Millia?"

"I-I don't! She was just walking down the corridor, so I..."

While Aleist denied it, from the start, he held a favorable impression of Millia as a capture target character. But that was a one-sided affection through a game, and a setting simply imposed on a character called Millia. Lately, with what happened with Rudel, he had learned to suppress his logic to take certain actions because it was a game.

Looking at them now, the game's characters seemed to be more charming than they ever had been in-game. The existence of Millia who he had only ever seen as one of a harem, looking at her like this, he couldn't see her as someone buried within some harem.

Her lovely green hair, her white skin, and her cute face... her slender build, and while she looked delicate, she was an elf warrior capable of battle. Aleist had been enraptured a number of times by the iridescent wings of elven magic she produced in battle. And he thought her cold impression, and her strong will were just part of her charm.

"She's strong-willed, prim and proper, but as I recall, Millia likes Rudel, doesn't she?"

And just like that, his friend stabbed him with an unrelenting truth. Turning to him, Aleist cried out.

"No way!"

"No, it's true, I tell you. So if you don't act soon, you might be too late! Is all I

wanted to say, but... are you listening, Aleist?"

"For real... but the Three Lords have good grades and good faces, but I don't think my face loses out... no, I practically lose in all other fields, so that doesn't really mean..."

"Ah, he's at it again."

"Yep."

As those friends consoled a depressed Aleist, from that day forth, they chose to cooperate with Aleist's love.



The fact the new students were entering the dorm meant the graduates had already left. A change had to come about the Fifth years who had served as the dorm's prefects... and there was a feud on who would take on the task.

"I don't want to, you hear! Of all times, why do I have to be a prefect when we have four super problem children on our hands!?"

"Isn't your house in the Arses faction? You be prefect."

"No, not happening. Stopping Rudel is impossible for me!"

"If only Vargas was held back a year! Then we wouldn't have anything to worry about..."

Opinions flew about the meeting room of the dorm, as students zealously tried to pass the role onto one another. Normally, a young noble would take the leadership role, and commoners would serve under them to carry out odd jobs. But the year before was a special one where everyone was a commoner student who had earned knight qualifications.

It was Rudel's fault. The kickstart for that unprecedented correspondence lay in Rudel's repeated problematic behavior. The pickup incident, his duel requests, and his infiltration into the girls' dorm...

"That guy gets a free pass to the girls' dorm you know!? Before jealous, I have to respect him!"

"In the past, sneaking into the girls' dorm was an inevitable even, but now that all the high knights are there, there aren't any idiots who would try to sneak in... right?"

“Of course it’s impossible! There are even rumors of him with the second princess! I’d be lucky if I just got kicked out of my house for that one.”

“Those high knights, you know. If it’s to protect the princess’ chastity, I heard they can even cut boys down in their wake.”

“Like hell they could cut down one of the three lords.”

“This is just an if. But if some idiot besides Rudel tries to enter the girls’ dorm while I’m prefect...”

The conference room grew quiet. This was another reason they couldn’t decide. Fina’s existence put a heavy responsibility on the boys’ dorm prefects. The cut down part was likely an empty threat, but more than that, there was no guarantee there wouldn’t be any idiots among the freshmen.

“I definitely don’t want to!”

“A-are there any problem children among the new students?”

“There are some every year, but this year, we’re getting some from a marquis house...”

“Lets pray there aren’t any big-shot rookies on Rudel’s level.”

Normally, overlooking the high-ranking nobles who snuck into the girls’ dorm was part of a prefect’s job. If that was used as a reason to harm the school’s relations, it was a cheap buy. But if anyone tried something like that now, it was much too dangerous.

As that was going on, one boy remembered the existence of Izumi. The sole existence who could stop Rudel with words, and even the other two of the Three Lords listened to her. Her miraculous existence was just as famous as Rudel.

“No, wait a second, isn’t there that foreigner called Izumi among the fourth years? How about we make her our prefect?”

“That’s an exceedingly wonderful idea, but not happening.”

“I know, right.”

The fifth years didn’t even know why they were going through such trouble. Eventually the time came, and the day ended without any prefects decided.